

## USEFUL READING

Building & Repairing Dry Stone Walls (DSWA): basic guide to practical dry stone walling.

Dry Stone Walling by Col. F. Rainsford-Hannay: a general view of the craft.

Dry Stone Walling (BTCV): a manual, which includes historical, geographical and regional information.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain is a registered charity that seeks to ensure the best craftsmanship of the past is preserved and that the craft has a thriving future. The DSWA publishes a range of useful leaflets (specifications, lists of contractors, notes on wildlife in walls, guide to inspecting work, etc.) and offers a mail order service on these and a range of books. The Association is able to provide information and occasionally local contacts. For information pack please send a stamped, addressed envelope to:

**Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain**  
**Lane Farm, Crooklands, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, LA7 7NH**  
Registered as a charitable organisation in England and Wales: 289678

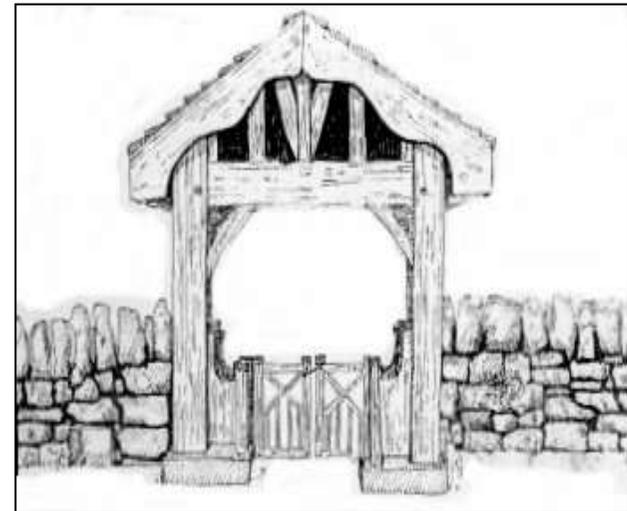
This leaflet has been prepared in conjunction with:

**Caring for God's Acre**  
6 West Street, Leominster, HR6 8ES  
Tel: 01568 611154  
[www.caringforgodsacre.co.uk](http://www.caringforgodsacre.co.uk)  
Registered charity 1084504

# DRY STONE WALLING ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN



## DRY STONE WALLS AROUND CHURCHYARDS



Produced in conjunction with Caring for God's Acre

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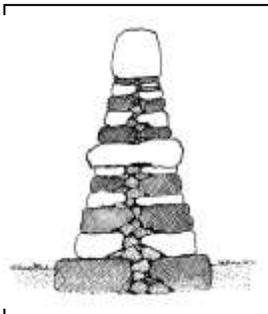
Churchyards **all** have a boundary to define the sacred area and, more practically, to keep farm animals out. However, sheep, goats and geese are sometimes shut inside nowadays until the grass is cut. Depending on the type of country, the boundary may be a hedge, or a stone or brick wall built using mortar. In upland areas where stone abounds, many boundaries are unmortared, dry stone walls, built in the regional style. In older churchyards many of these walls are now semi-retaining with the ground inside the churchyard higher than that beyond.

### DRY STONE WALLS

The boundary will be a wall rather than a hedge or fence because it gives a feeling of solidity and respectability; this is the same idea as used by architects of banks. It will use brick or stone depending on the vernacular, although stone is favoured to give a more substantial or special impression.

The wall construction may be mortared or dry. A dry stone wall usually lasts longer than when mortared because it will survive settling of the foundations. However, high, narrow walls usually need mortar. With increasing funds, the dry stone walls have often been replaced by mortared walls which need better foundations and a mason to dress the stone to regular shapes. As a compromise the stone dressing may only be carried out on the top stones, corners and wall-ends with the main stones natural and dry. Sometimes the dry stone walls have been "improved" in appearance by mortar or cement pointing.

The stone itself may be local stone as used in neighbouring farm walls but often better quality stone has been brought in. It is quite probable that churchyard walls were built with stone left over from the church itself using up the "rubble" or stones which the masons felt were not suitable for the main structure. The geology of the church and boundary walls can be as interesting as that of the grave stones described in *Geology in the Churchyard*.



(Cross-section of "double" wall)

In England, the majority of dry stone walls are built in the "doubled" style: two "skins" or faces, with carefully placed hearting, throughstones and copestones. No mortar or cement should be incorporated in the wall, although occasionally it is necessary to use a very

careful application of mortar to the top copestones to prevent their removal. More rarely, walls built of large, single stones and even with upright flagstones are found in England. In the south-west will be found Devon Banks and Cornish Hedges: stone-faced banks with an earth infill.

### HABITAT

Many varieties of flowering plants, ferns, lichens and mosses find the ideal habitat in a dry stone wall. The sunny face of the wall is often desert-like but the shaded side favours moisture-loving plants. The wall itself provides valuable shelter in exposed areas. Insects and small animals also thrive in and around dry stone walls.



### SURVEYS

The dry stone walls of churchyards are a source of interest to the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain, as well as to others involved with the *Living Churchyard* project. The DSWA would like to receive information about dry stone walls and has a detailed survey pack available from the office, along with a more concise sheet specifically relating to churchyard walls, which is included in this leaflet.

### MANAGEMENT

If embarking on a management plan for your churchyard, you should seek detailed information on the work necessary for the maintenance of dry stone walling. If eligible for grants, you will need to provide estimates from professional dry stone wallers. It is important to use qualified dry stone wallers and to ensure that the traditional style of construction for your area is followed in a programme of repair or rebuilding. A competent professional dry stone waller will rebuild a wall ensuring that lichen-clad stones are re-laid with as little disturbance as possible to the plants. Any nests found within the wall are also incorporated wherever possible.

