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‘Set in Stone?’ Building a New Geography of the Dry-Stone Wall

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Abstract

Dry-stone walls in Britain have a rich and enduring landscape heritage: they extend for miles across the countryside but are all too often overlooked. Contrary to common laments that describe walling as a dying craft, this thesis explores the social, cultural and historical geographies which frame walling as a thriving trade and lively hobby. It employs ethnographic and practice-led methodologies (undertaken primarily in Scotland) to understand the embodied, emotional and material dimensions of the dry-stone craft. Methods include observant participation of instructional courses, craft demonstrations and competitions; in-depth interviews with professional and amateur wallers; and, documentary analysis of textual walling material dating from the early 20th century. The thesis considers the place of the rural dry-stone wall and explains how economic, social and cultural developments have led to the construction of dry-stone features within more urbanised locales. In so doing, this research explains how walling has become a socially and culturally diverse activity, enrolled within narratives of contemporary forms of craftpersonship and community engagement projects. By engaging directly with dry-stone walling practice, this thesis also addresses recent disciplinary appeals to explore experimental and participatory approaches to doing research. Taking seriously knowledge acquired through the body, it therefore refigures, in vital and novel ways, how contemporary realisations of historic landscapes and craft traditions are known and understood.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Printed Name: Mhairi Paterson

Abbreviations

BTCV – British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (now The Conservation Volunteers)

CAP – Common Agricultural Policy

CoSIRA – Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas

DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport

DOST – Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue

DSC – Dry Stone Conservancy

DSL – Dictionary of Scots Language

DSWA – Dry Stone Walling Association

DSWAC – Dry Stone Walling Across Canada

DSWAI – Dry Stone Walling Association Ireland

HCA – Heritage Crafts Association

HCF – Huntly Cultural Fund

HLF – Heritage Lottery Fund

HMH – Huntly Mental Health (now Networks of Wellbeing)

ICH – Intangible Cultural Heritage

MHF – Mental Health Foundation

NoW – Networks of Wellbeing (formerly Huntly Mental Health)

NT – National Trust

NTS – National Trust for Scotland

PCF – The Prince's Countryside Fund

SND – Scottish National Dictionary

SAC – Scottish Agricultural College

SPS – Société Scientifique Internationale pour l'étude Pluridisciplinaire de la Pierre Sèche

TCV – The Conservation Volunteers (formerly British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

UNESCO – The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO – World Health Organisation

WSDSWA – West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association

Chapter 1 : Introduction



Figure 1-1: A dry-stone wall or dry-stane dyke is a wall built of stone without the use of mortar. (Photo by author.)

Growing up in the Scottish countryside, I had a background familiarity with dry-stone walls. From my bedroom window it was possible to see several miles of stone wall, squaring off farmland and unfurling across hillsides. On local walks, it was sometimes necessary to climb precariously over a tall, imposing dyke to continue on a desired path. Other walls were notable for their functionality; partially ruined, a fallen boulder could provide the ideal stepping-stone onto the back of a horse. When I say I was familiar with the walls which surrounded me, this was in a detached, uncritical way, vaguely aware of their presence. I may have seen them almost every day of my childhood but I did not truly notice them. Coming to my defence, Colonel F. Rainsford-Hannay, author and experienced waller, noted how overlooking walls was a common occurrence:

“Some people do look upon these walls with interest, and even with wonder, but many more do not. The vast majority, though, in the course of their lives, take them as a matter of course, and seldom given them even a passing thought.” (Rainsford-Hannay, 1957: 19)

Now, in light of the research in which I am currently involved, I am rather ashamed to admit I was one of those individuals who ‘seldom gave them a passing thought’. I was aware of the differences in nomenclature – dry-stane dykes in Scotland and dry-stone walls elsewhere, but I gave no consideration to *who* constructed them. I did not think of the men (and it was almost exclusively men, for it is only in the past few decades women have become involved in walling) who in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries worked upon exposed hillsides for twelve hours or more a day. These men were paid by the ‘piece’, meaning

they were expected to complete six to seven yards of wall per day before being paid (Rainsford-Hannay 1957). As a result, they learnt to work hard and quickly, in ways which were both time and energy efficient. I did not consider *why* these walls were built and that some might serve a purpose beyond the enclosure of livestock. Erected in response to changing agricultural practices and landownership policies, walls in Scotland, and the rest of Britain have a rich heritage, informed by social, economic and cultural developments of the time.



Figure 1-2: A moss-covered wall with fallen cope-stones. (Photo by author.)

I did not think of *how* the walls were built, or if they required repair. Moss-covered stone give a wall an almost natural appearance, as if growing organically from the earth. Trees, shrubs and plants weave in and around the structure of a dry-stone wall, gradually encouraging stones to slip and tumble until the wall is no longer able to serve its function. The top stones, or cope-stones, are often the first to fall, and in so doing, mark the commencement of the walls' "death sentence" (see Figure 1-2). Without its top stones, the wall is vulnerable to the elements, plants, animals and inconsiderate humans, like my childhood self, who would rather climb than walk to find a suitable stile. Lower layers begin to slump and fall, carefully pinned stones are loosened by rain or frost until eventually, the larger stones to which they provide support become victims of gravity. The stones that tumble are slowly consumed by the ground and though it means the wall's end, the stones have come full circle, returning to the place from which they originated. Therefore, in some ways, the dry-stone wall is organic; born from stones wrenched from the earth, it grows and changes alongside other living organisms and succumbs to the inevitability of the earth. It is this organic appearance which means walls are seen, but not

noticed. They configure the landscape according to historical needs and desires, but also provide a pleasing perspective for the viewer (Figure 1-3). They vary in form, function and respond to underlying geology, making them geographically distinct and characteristic of particular regions. To the untrained (or unobservant) eye, like the walls themselves, such variations often go unnoticed. Of course, if suddenly removed from the landscape, their absence would render them instantly visible. As I embarked upon this project, I quickly came to learn that in subtle ways, dry-stone walls add character and charm to places and are rich in social and cultural heritage.



Figure 1-3: Dry-stone walls in Derbyshire, UK. (Source: Roger Temple © (2007))

Throughout the course of this research, I have lost count of the number of people, who upon enquiring about my project, tell me in an assured manner that dry-stone walling is a dying trade. Very early in the project I began to realise this statement was neither true nor accurate. Professional wallers told me how they became frustrated hearing this oft-repeated phrase, considering it to belittle their skills and chosen trade. Certainly, in the 1930s and 1940s, there was some concern over the vitality of walling skill in Britain, however the establishment of annual walling competitions and the Stewartry Drystone Dyking Committee in south-west Scotland in 1938 (later to become the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain) made certain the craft endured. Today walling exists in various parts of Britain (and beyond) as a vibrant trade, and popular amateur and hobbyist craft. Yet still, I continue to hear people say, *“It’s a dyin’ skill y’know. You don’t see ony dykers about the hills these days.”* Like the walls themselves, it seems as though hillside dykers are conspicuous by their absence. In response, I told these well-meaning individuals that dyking does still go on, just not in the places you might expect. Guided by a recent revival of public interest in traditional and rural crafts, walling has taken on new

aspects, and it continues to maintain a firm hold of its historic foundations. Within a few short hours of picking up my first stone, I became aware of how little walling practice has changed since the first fields were cleared of stone and enclosed. Form is still very much dictated by stone type, thus maintaining a level of geographical distinctiveness that is both aesthetically appealing and authentic to the origins of the craft.

Geographically Distinct Walls

Dry-stone walls and structures are found not only in Britain, but many locations around the world. They usually occur in places with large quantities of stone and where the topography or climate does not support the growth or construction of any other type of boundary (DSWA 2002). In 1957 Rainsford-Hannay wrote of walls and walling traditions in Madeira, West Africa, South Australia and Canada. Since then however, knowledge of historical dry-stone construction outside Britain has greatly improved and extended. They are now known to exist extensively across Europe, parts of the US and many other countries. The accessibility of international travel and improved communication links no doubt play a significant role in the international awareness of dry-stone construction. Global networks between the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (henceforth DSWA) and its members are extremely important in sharing contemporary and historical accounts of walling in other countries.

Though the DSWA has widespread impact, in recent years several organisations for the conservation of walling have formed in other parts of the world. Many have strong links to the DSWA, enshrine the same objectives and promote training opportunities. The Dry-stone Walls Association of Australia (2012) observes that much of the country's dry-stone walling was constructed in Colonial times by European settlers. It is generally accepted that this was also the case in New Zealand and North America (Tufnell 2012; Breathitt 2011; Griffiths 1999). Three non-profit organisations currently exist in North America; two in the USA and another in Canada. All are dedicated to the provision of training and act as advocates for the craft.

Established in 1996, the Dry-Stone Conservancy (henceforth DSC) is located in Kentucky, an area of the USA rich in dry-stone heritage (DSC 2013). Dry-stone fences, dwellings and bridges were constructed using the locally abundant limestone, but as a result of road widening and property development, many examples have been removed or fallen into disrepair (DSC 2013). Using the DSWA examination structure as a model, the DSC has developed its own system of certification and is tailored to the needs of preservationists and professionals working in the USA. A more recent organisation is The Stone Trust,

founded in 2010 and based in Vermont. Unlike the DSC, The Stone Trust has chosen to follow the certification structure of the DSWA and throughout the year provides instruction and examination by DSWA qualified practitioners (Post 2013). Given the northerly location of The Stone Trust, membership also stretches into Canada and has helped establish a healthy number of approximately fifty certified wallers. In addition to Canadian involvement with The Stone Trust, an association was formed in Ontario in 2000. Dry-stone Walling Across Canada (henceforth DSWAC) organises several events every year, some of which also take place in British Columbia, Newfoundland and Montreal. One such event is the Festival of Stone, held annually over two days, usually around Canadian Thanksgiving weekend in October. The event brings together beginner, amateur and professional dry-stone walling enthusiasts from around the world to share building techniques and enjoy demonstrations and presentations. The more experienced individuals are also involved in building projects, such as the double arch dry-stone bridge constructed at the 2012 Festival of Stone (Rimington 2012). Like in the USA, there are few examples of historic walls remaining in Canada. Anecdotal accounts suggest some old stone fences exist within the province of Ontario but it is understood these are few and limited in scale. As a result of the few remaining examples of historic walling in North America, much of the current dry-stone work is therefore decorative in nature. One of the founders of The Stone Trust is Dan Snow, DSWA Mastercraftsman and author of *In the Company of Stone* (2001) and *Listening to Stone* (2008). Snow's decorative work demonstrates how it can be both visually appealing and functional. Much of this is similar to decorative walling found in Britain and further reflects the creative element of contemporary walling practices. Inspired by traditional methods of wall construction and fuelled by creative enthusiasm, it appears that an alternative branch of walling culture has developed in parts of Britain and North America and is now in the process of constructing a new kind of dry-stone heritage.

Ireland has a long history of dry-stone construction, dating from the 5000 year old Céide Field enclosures in County Mayo, western Ireland (McAfee 2011). Though much of the stone has been buried under peat bog, sections which have been excavated suggest that approximately 250 000 tonnes of stone exist within an area of only 10km² (McAfee 2011). More recently, extensive agricultural walls have been constructed throughout the country, with the most notable and unique found in the Aran Isles, off the coast of County Galway. Here field walls amount to approximately 1500km and are constructed from a combination of carboniferous limestone and shale (McAfee 2011). The abundance, type of stone and unusual building methods means that the dry-stone landscape of Aran is extremely

distinctive and unique (Figure 1-4). Walls are generally of single style, where friction between stones generates stability and gaps allow for the passage of wind without compromising integrity (Laheen 2010). In some places, ‘removable’ stone gaps are used to connect fields and allow for the passage of animals or agricultural equipment (Laheen 2010). When access is required, the stone within the gaps is removed and built up again once it has served its purpose. This feature appears to be unique to the Aran Isles as, at present, there is no evidence of it anywhere else. Despite the extensive dry-stone heritage in Ireland, the Dry-Stone Wall Association of Ireland was formed relatively recently in 2009 (DSWAI 2014). Like other associations, the DSWAI organises a variety of courses, demonstrations and events for their amateur and professional members.

In addition to the building of walls as agricultural boundaries, in other parts of Europe dry-stone structures serve various functions. A study of historic vineyards in south western Germany reveals that dry-stone retaining walls were used in the construction of terraces to improve the steeply sloping land for soil management and growth of grapes (Petit *et al* 2012). Dry-stone retaining walls and terraces are common features throughout Britain and are used to help stabilise road or path cuttings and riverbanks (Hart 1980). In Germany, the earliest written reference to the use of dry-stone in vineyards dates back to the 15th century, where in the context of controlling soil erosion problems, the maintenance of walls and terraces are mentioned (Petit *et al* 2012). Extensive dry-stone terraces also feature throughout parts of the Mediterranean (Figure 1-5). Much of the landscape is characterised by outcrops of stone and over the centuries has been used to construct not just terracing, but also stone houses, barns and other forms of shelter (Paxton 2011). In particular, areas of settlement in the Serra de Tramuntana mountain range in the north-west of the Balearic island of Mallorca have been noted for their cultural significance. Here, the landscape is dominated by agricultural features including interconnected water-works and dry-stone terraces. Such constructions have transformed the once difficult terrain into functional areas of cultivatable land. In recognition of this transformation, in 2011 the cultural landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana was inscribed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site of Outstanding Universal Value (UNESCO 2014a).



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Figure 1-4: Traditional stone wall on Inis Meáin, one of the Aran Isles.¹ Owing to the irregularity of the stone, building technique is unusual and relies on the friction between the abrasive stones to generate stability. (Used with permission from: *Stone Walls: Personal Boundaries* by Mariana Cook, Damiani Editore, 2011)

These are only a sample of the extensive traditional and contemporary examples of dry-stone walling which exist throughout the world. Walls and other dry-stone features have also been found in parts of Finland (Hazard 2006), extensively throughout Malta (Paxton 2011), the island of Hvar, Croatia (Gibbons 2013) and Peru (Cummins 2011). Testament to geographical extent of dry-stone features, in 1996 an international group of scientists, craftspeople and dry-stone enthusiasts came together to form *Société Scientifique Internationale pour l'étude Pluridisciplinaire de la Pierre Sèche*. Translated as the Scientific Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Dry-stone, the group is more commonly referred to as S.P.S. and is based in southern France. It is the aim of the society to unite scientists, amateurs and institutions in the protection and conservation of dry-stone techniques (SPS 2014).

Prior to the official formation of the society in 1996, casual meetings of interested parties have taken place in various European cities since 1988. This tradition has continued and

¹ Inis Meáin is the middle in size and position of the three main Aran Isles. The island is also known in English as Inishmaan.

Congress currently takes place every two years. In 2010, the 12th International Dry-stone Walling Congress was held in Ambleside, Cumbria. This was the first time it had been hosted in Britain and saw attendance of approximately 130 international delegates over three days in September (Love 2010). To provide a record and coverage of the Ambleside Congress, proceedings of the event were produced by the DSWA. They recount, in detail – though not always in English – the presentations given. Unfortunately, such proceedings have only been produced for one other Congress event in Montalbán, Spain in 2006. Though the outcomes of these Congress events are vague, in themselves they provide an overview of the geographical variations in historical and contemporary dry-stone walling.



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Figure 1-5: Terraced field walls near Caimari, Sencelles, a mountainous area of central Mallorca. (Used with permission from: *Stone Walls: Personal Boundaries* by Mariana Cook, Damiani Editore, 2011)

It is also the case that walling skills are exchanged at an international level, for example the Leonardo Project, as detailed previously, encourages the sharing of skills and knowledge between its partners in Italy, France, Spain and Britain (DSWA 2012). Though the main aim of the project is to promote walling as a career, the organisers are aware that skills are more valuable if built on a foundation of different kinds of techniques and approaches.

Though it is not possible to detail all locations with examples of dry-stone walling, this geographical overview demonstrates that there are many communities and associations of dry-stone craftspeople throughout the world. Some of these groups have been inspired by the DSWA of Great Britain, follow their examination structure and maintain channels of communication. Others, such as the S.P.S. and the Dry-Stone Conservancy, organise their own events or create a certification process more relevant to their needs. Despite variation in approach, it appears that all organisations are respectful and supportive of each other. It is also the case that all associations are aware of the diverse social and cultural interests in walling and have structured their organisations accordingly. What is most notable, however, is the willingness and drive to share knowledge and learn from others.

Thesis Context

Despite these internationally diverse examples of dry-stone craftwork, it is the re-emergence of dry-stone walling practice in Britain which acts as the impetus for this research. Once thought of as a skill under threat, walling has slowly become known as a specialist form of expertise in the British craft economy, with a dedicated organisational body to support craftspeople and ensure the continuity of technique. Currently, there are over two hundred qualified dry-stone professionals registered with the DSWA, approximately thirty of whom are located in Scotland. In addition to supporting the development of professional walling, the DSWA also encourages amateur and hobbyist involvement through a variety of community groups and societies. As such, walling is proving to be an effective means of empowering people from marginalised or vulnerable social groups through voluntary involvement in landscape conservation projects. While enjoying a revival of interest, the cultural value of walls and the artistry involved in their construction is not well known beyond expert craftspeople and directly involved communities (with regards to artistry, for an exception, see doctoral research by Farrar 2006). The aim of this thesis is therefore to redress this situation by critically examining the diverse social and cultural heritage of dry-stone walls and walling practice.

Exemplified by dry-stone walling, many traditional and contemporary forms of craft are enjoying a renaissance, however within academic geography only recently has there been research interest shown in the complexities of making and creating. The significance of craft and creative practice has been variously explored within the social sciences and arts and humanities (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, 2002; Sennett 2008; Ingold 2010; Charny 2011; Gauntlett 2011), but also in popular non-fiction (Crawford 2009) and recent public policy documents in which craft is noted for its role within British rural economies as well as

facilitating social wellbeing (Crafts Council 2010; Crafts Council 2012; Bertram 2013; DCMS 2014a). While these literatures recognise craft as a way of skilfully constructing things by hand (OED 2000), they also note how crafts and crafting can be understood socially, culturally, economically and politically. In recent years, geographers have begun to engage with the various dimensions of craft through explorations of creative communities and industries (Thomas *et al* 2010; 2013; Warren and Gibson 2014), materiality and embodied making (Paton 2013), the various dimensions of creativity (Edensor *et al* 2009; Hawkins 2014, 2015), and the power and politics of making and crafting in an urban environment (Mann 2015; Price 2015). In addition to published material, sessions concerning the geographies of crafting and making have drawn attention at international conferences. At the 2012 annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, academics came together to discuss a variety of themes relating to craft and crafting, including craftivism, the spatialities of craft and crafting, the changing social status of craftspeople and the economics of crafting. More recently at the 2014 Royal Geographical Society (with Institute of British Geographers) conference in London, several sessions were dedicated to discussing how ideas of place, community, practice and materiality can contribute to a better understanding of the geographies of making. In taking these examples forward as foundations, this thesis is therefore framed by the need to further explore the geographies of craftpersonship, making and creativity. In this research, dry-stone walling is uniquely exemplified as a craft and subject through which the multiple geographies of making, from those which lie with the body to wider historical, social and cultural dimensions, can be explored. Furthermore, it considers the possibility for the walling craft to 'make' geographies, such as within traditions of craftsmanship and community engagement projects. Walling practice therefore offers an opportunity to contribute to an emerging and enlightening research community focussed on the geographies of craft and crafting.

In addition to becoming familiar with the historical, social and cultural dimensions of dry-stone walls and walling, this research project explores the merits of a phenomenological approach for better understanding embodied and emotional engagements with stone. It addresses recent disciplinary appeals to explore experimental, participatory approaches to doing research by focussing not on the body as a subject, but as a medium *through* which geographers engage with the world (Crang 2005; Nash 2000). In doing so, conventional understandings of geographical research are challenged as creative and experimental ways of coming to know the world. This thesis aims to capitalise upon such an opportunity by engaging directly with dry-stone walling practice, using knowledge acquired through the

body to refigure, in vital and novel ways, how historic landscapes and craft traditions come to be known and understood. In attending to such methodological opportunities and in fulfilment of the aforementioned aims, this thesis is designed to meet the following objectives:

- To examine the ways in which the historical, cultural and social geographies of dry-stone walling in Scotland and beyond are variously produced through geology, building styles, material practices and traditions, organisational bodies and forms of craftsmanship.
- To analyse the knowledge practices and specialist techniques integral to dry-stone walling and how such skills are effectively transmitted and communicated between craftspeople.
- To consider how participatory and practice-based methodologies facilitate and enhance understanding of embodied, emotional and material interactions with the dry-stone craft.
- To investigate the part played by local training initiatives, based on an ethic of community development and mental and physical wellbeing, in ensuring a sustainable future for traditional rural crafts such as dry-stone walling.

These objectives demonstrate the need to approach walling as a complex research subject, one which needs to be understood historically, regionally, culturally, creatively, economically, socially and practically. In recognition of these geographies, it has been necessary to take a consciously eclectic approach to research. I have therefore called upon a wide range of literatures, both within geography and other disciplines, to better understand and articulate the nuances of the dry-stone walling world. The execution of the research was primarily based within Scotland, however owing to the strong links between craft practices in Scotland and those in England, Wales and beyond, reference is also made to walling activities outside of Scotland. In recognition of the geographical variations in terminology noted across Britain, the thesis therefore refers to the practice as dry-stone walling and dry-stane or dry-stone dyking. The following section outlines the individual chapters of the thesis, drawing attention to key themes and the methods employed to address the aforementioned aims and objectives.

Thesis Outline

In progressing from the introduction, Chapter 2 establishes the **Theoretical Foundations** for the thesis. The chapter opens with an introduction to the historical geography of walls and their construction in relation to Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the 17th and 18th

centuries. These enclosure walls were built in strict geometric patterns and often according to specific guidelines and measurements. Though many of these building standards remain today, walls vary geographically according to underlying geology, traditions of construction and political agenda. I then move on to introduce contemporary approaches to landscape study which, informed by ideas in archaeology and anthropology, have encouraged human geographers to move beyond representations of landscape to consider it as an entity in which humans are participants. I explore how approaches to landscape phenomenology, theories of dwelling and the taskscape (Ingold 2000), landscape practice and performance and vital material engagements (Bennett 2010), open-up creative new ways in which to engage with the walling landscape. Phenomenological engagement is primarily framed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theories of body and mind entwined and as a result, provides a basis for the embodied, emotional and multi-sensual engagement with walling developed in later empirical chapters. The final section of Chapter 2 introduces theories around health and wellbeing and alongside non-representational theories of affect (Andrews *et al* 2014) and relationality (Conradson 2005), it considers the role of therapeutic landscapes and practices. Therapeutic experiences are understood as complex and contingent upon social, cultural and environmental contexts. Engagement with these literatures also provides a basis for the consideration of dry-stone walling as a valued hobby and practice in fostering social interaction and community development.

Following on from the review of relevant literature, Chapter 3, **Methodology**, opens with the theoretical underpinnings for my fieldwork design and chosen research methods. As such, a more-than-representational and phenomenological approach to landscape practice invites first-hand embodied engagements with dry-stone walling through several periods of observant participation with community walling groups. Observant participation also provided the opportunity to interact more significantly with Huntly Mental Health group, allowing me to further explore the potential benefits to physical and mental health and wellbeing afforded through participants' engagement with walling. Around this core of observant participation, I justify the use of additional research methods to address the multiple dimensions of the walling craft in Britain. This includes in-depth interviews with professionals and committed amateur wallers as well as examination of key walling-related documents dating from the early 20th century. I then move on to discuss my analytical strategies as well as consider my positionality in the research and the methodological challenges that impacted upon the project. The chapter also provides a short commentary on my use of field drawings, examples of which are flecked throughout the thesis.

The first of four empirical chapters, **A History of the Dry-Stone Craft and Craftspeople** (Chapter 4), provides historical context for dry-stone walling practice in Britain. To familiarise the reader with walling practice and terminology, building techniques and traditions are explained in the first instance. In endeavouring to provide more embodied, emotional and material appreciations of walling activity, attention turns to the documented memoirs of a waller working in early 20th century Scotland. Such Pre-War walling experiences also act as a point of comparison for contemporary walling practices encountered in Chapter 5. The final half of the chapter introduces the contemporary institutional manifestations of walling in Britain, most notably in relation to the formation of the Dry Stone Walling Association (DSWA) in 1968. An organisational history of the DSWA is provided as well as an overview of the methods by which the Association ensures the sustainability of the dry-stone walling craft. Though the DSWA plays a significant role in British walling culture, the concluding section notes that there are examples of walling which exist outside the auspices of the organisation.

Chapter 5, **The Contemporary Dry-Stone Walling Profession** uses documentary sources and interviews with contemporary professional wallers to explain how the working conditions and opportunities for career development have changed and improved in the past decade. The chapter also draws attention to a gradual but significant shift from agricultural work to ornamental garden features. With reduced funding available for the repair of agricultural walls and increased public interest in the ‘old-style-charm’ of a dry-stone wall, professionals have honed their skills and embraced a vibrant market in high-quality, attractive ornamental features, commanding significantly higher fees than the repair or construction of agricultural boundaries does. The role of the DSWA and craft performances such as competitions and demonstrations that support the development of professional careers is also noted. Overall, this chapter considers the cultural, social and economic dimensions of the contemporary dry-stone profession.

While Chapter 5 sets the scene for the changing culture of professional walling, Chapter 6 explores the process of becoming familiar with the craft of walling and developing **A Sense of Stone**. Initially the chapter uses diary extracts from periods of observant participation to offer insights into the knowledge-practices and specialist techniques associated with learning the skills of walling from experienced craftspeople. Next, I interleave personal experience with interview accounts from professional and serious amateur wallers to enrich discussion with more seasoned appreciations of the craft. In the second half of the chapter I approach walling from a phenomenological perspective and consider the development of skill as an education of the body, mind and senses. In doing

so, I reflect on the achievement of ‘flow’ where links are created between flexible, yet controlled, embodied interactions with stone and the wallers’ emotional state of mind. Conversely, a reduction of physical ability due to age, repetitive practice and poor weather conditions are also considered for their capacity to impact negatively upon the embodied and emotional wellbeing of the waller. This chapter demonstrates how in combination with interview methods, participatory engagement with the walling craft can uncover the nuances associated with embodied, emotional and material interaction with stone.

Chapter 7, the final empirical chapter, is entitled **Craft, Creativity and Making Connections**. Where Chapter 6 was concerned with the embodied and emotional intricacies of making, this chapter shows, in a broader sense, how craft and creative practice can help establish meaningful connections between people and places. Empirically, the chapter brings findings from observant participation with hobbyist and community walling groups alongside material gained from informal conversation with participants and more structured follow-up focus groups. I explore the potential for physical, mental and social wellbeing afforded by participation in group walling activities and, in establishing a narrative for these themes, reflect upon extensive participation with Huntly Mental Health group, based in Aberdeenshire. Potential benefits to wellbeing are subsequently critiqued and distilled into elements specific to group walling work such as, the social dimensions of cooperative working, creative engagement with stone, and, the construction of meaningful places for communities. The second half of the chapter takes a step back to consider the wider phenomenon of making and crafting culture, and its place within the geographies of creative industries and communities. Specifically within walling crafting culture, the chapter concludes by addressing the connections established between the DSWA, professionals, amateurs and community walling groups that contribute to the sustainability of the craft.

The **Conclusion** provides an overview of the key empirical and conceptual outcomes of the research and offers reflection on the place of dry-stone walls and walling within contemporary crafting landscapes. I contemplate the future of dry-stone walls by reflecting on their ruination and place within a temporal landscape and provide some thoughts on future research that might build upon the foundations laid down here.

Chapter 2 : Theoretical Foundations

“Human beings do not, in their movements inscribe their life histories upon the surface of nature as do writers upon their page; rather, these histories are woven, along with the life-cycles of plants and animals, into the texture of the surface itself”
(Ingold 2000: 198).

The chapter begins with an introduction to the historical geography of walling in Britain, discussed in relation to pre-parliamentary enclosure walls and those constructed following Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the 17th and 18th centuries. Differences between enclosure and pre-enclosure walls are noted, so too their effects upon the social and physical landscape. Parliamentary enclosure had extensive impacts across Britain, although differences between Scotland and England are noted. In tandem with widespread enclosure came political, social and economic change, much of which wrought injustices upon the rural labouring classes (Neeson 1993). Dry-stone walls were commonly used to define these enclosures and were often built in strict geometric patterns, sweeping uncompromisingly across the land (Hoskins 1985). The job of enclosure commissioners was to oversee the building of the walls and it was not uncommon for them to lay down strict specifications for construction. In time these building specifications became the accepted standard for dry-stone wall construction, a standardisation that remains in place today. It is the aim of this section to provide an introduction to the social, economic and political geographies embedded within walls constructed in response to Enclosure Acts. In doing so, it invites consideration of how such geographies have developed with regard to contemporary perceptions of walls and forms of walling practice.

Developing upon the historical foundations of the dry-stone wall and walling practice, subsequent sections of this chapter add depth to those cultures through critical engagement with literatures from human geography, archaeology, anthropology and material studies. From the outset, inspiration for the consideration of walling as an embodied, material practice is drawn from landscape theory – a key approach within contemporary human geography literatures. I will outline how a phenomenological approach to landscape and the embodied dispositions associated with being-in-the-world can uncover the minutiae of embodied, emotional and material interactions associated with walling practice. Through a

detailed engagement with Ingold's 'dwelling perspective', I note how the lives and tasks of humans are woven into landscape, leaving traces of their existence. In light of the social, cultural and political aspects of walling introduced at the outset of this chapter, historical and contemporary walling activities are characterised as a task through which humans *make* and *dwell* in landscape. The theme of being in landscape and creating place acts as a foundation for the latter part of the chapter where I explore how walling can generate feelings of mental and physical wellbeing in participants. To this end, literatures associated with therapeutic places, emotionally engaging practices and the benefits of flow are each critically examined.

Historical Geography of Walls

Since most of the dry-stone walling that people in Britain are familiar with was built more than a century ago, it is important to provide historical context. The majority of these dry-stone walls were constructed during the late 17th and 18th centuries, when agricultural practices and land ownership rights were changing by order of Parliament. The subsequent Parliamentary enclosures significantly altered the social, physical, cultural and economic landscape of many rural areas. Dry-stone walls became a technology of the wealthy, often preventing the lower classes from accessing land they had previously used to graze animals or grow crops. As a result, dry-stone walls, hedges, ditches and fences signified exclusion and dispossession (Blomley 2007). As the subsequent section will show, the experience of enclosure varied geographically, with some reacting to the changes with vandalism and violence. However prior to the Parliamentary enclosures, examples of dry-stone walling in Britain was patchy and provincial, often built according to the whims of the landowner or farmer. As will be explained, the physical presence of pre-enclosure dry-stone walls contrasted significantly with those built during Parliamentary enclosure. By providing an introduction to the historical geographies of walling, the following section tells the story of a strong and lengthy heritage of dry-stone construction in Britain. Walls speak of changing agricultural and land-use practices as well as dispossession and injustice. However as noted by Naylor (2011), this contested history of enclosure is often obscured by contemporary perceptions of walls as charming and orderly landscape features. It is therefore the aim of this section to restore an appropriate historical context to the dry-stone wall.

Pre-Parliamentary Enclosure Walls

The first known recordings of dry-stone walls in Britain are associated with the movement from a nomadic lifestyle to settled farming (Garner 1984; BTCV 1986; Fenton and Leitch

2011). However, very little is known about the methods of construction, location and specific agricultural purpose of these early walls. Fenton and Leitch (2011) suggest that they most likely arose from a need to enclose animals as well as to clear fields in preparation for arable production. Though such reasoning appears sound, there remains a great deal of uncertainty over the extent to which walls were used to delineate agricultural spaces. In examining the literature of British pre-enclosure agricultural systems, it is notable that permanent physical boundaries of any kind receive little attention. It is difficult to distinguish what kind of features were used to separate parcels of land, or indeed if any permanent physical boundaries were constructed for this purpose. Though it cannot be assumed that dry-stone walls were *extensively* used as agricultural boundaries, as will be explained, some parts of the literature suggest that they were used in places, alongside other partitions such as earthen banks, hedgerows or ditches. Historical cautions noted, attention can turn to the various kinds of agricultural practice evident in Britain prior to widespread enclosures of the 17th and 18th centuries. Though practices within Scotland see the most attention, those found in England shall also be covered.

It is suggested by Lord (2004) and Garner (1984) that some dry-stone walls in the upland areas of The Yorkshire Dales may date from the 12th or 13th centuries. Though little evidence is provided for these claims, Hoskins (1985) also notes that in parts of England, early forms of land enclosure may date as far back as the 10th century. One example from this time is described as a Celtic farmstead located in the far west of Cornwall where networks of small, irregular fields bounded by granite boulder walls are still evident. Though Hoskins identifies other examples of early dry-stone boundary walls within Cornwall, it is unclear whether features of this period were evident in other parts of England. Hoskins explains that by the beginning of the 16th century in addition to Cornwall, Devon and Somerset other counties, such as those in the south-east and Yorkshire and Northumberland were also “wholly enclosed” (1985: 141). It is noted that much of the enclosure in the lowland areas of the south was by hedgerow, but is unspecified for those of Yorkshire and Northumberland. It is an unfortunate feature of the pre-enclosure literature that little consistent information is provided on the specific types of boundary used to divide agricultural holdings. However, when considered in conjunction with Lord’s (2004) estimation and the examples of dry-stone practice found in other parts of England, one may entertain the idea that some of the early enclosures within the upland areas of Yorkshire and Northumberland were built in dry-stone.

Though it is possible dry-stone enclosures may date from the 10th century, it is recognised by Brian Jones, a former vice-president of the DSWA, that the specific dating of dry-stone

is a difficult task. In a presentation for the Dry-stone Walling Congress held in 2010, Jones explained how the combination of field and documentary research is the most reliable method of estimating the age of walls. Style of construction and assessment of artefacts found within walls, combined with identification of the general shape and size of enclosures from historical maps have allowed Jones (2010) to identify some of the key features of aged walls. Both Jones and Garner (1984) suggest that the first dry-stone enclosures fenced an area of modest size and were likely used to contain stock. Garner states that they may also have been “primitive in technique” (1984: 5) and built arbitrarily, according to the “whim” (1984: 5) of their owner or farmer. These characteristics are best understood in contrast to the building practices encouraged by the official enclosures acts and although these will be considered in greater detail later in the chapter, some of the basics are noted here to facilitate the appreciation of pre-enclosure dry-stone walls. Under the instruction of the official land commissioners, enclosure walls built in the 17th and 18th centuries were of a similar style, height and bounded areas in a geometric fashion. Such was the determination with which these walls were built, if a large tree or immovable boulder was encountered, it was often the case that they would be incorporated into the structure, rather than built around. This did not seem to be the case with pre-enclosure walls however, with many demonstrating an irregular pattern as a result of avoiding large features (Garner 1984). Though these suggestions may indicate some of the notable characteristics of pre-enclosure walls, there is little indication on how such walls were organised within agricultural practices of the time. In order to establish a better context within which to understand the potential functions of dry-stone walls, attention now turns to pre-enclosure field systems. However, to reiterate a point of caution made previously, since many descriptions of agricultural practices provide little information on the specific type of boundary used, it cannot be assumed that methods of construction are consistent throughout the British Isles. Type of boundary varied across Britain according to topography, climate and available materials (BTCV 1986) and in some cases, may have been a simple ridge of earth, piled with stones removed from the field during ploughing (Whittington 1973). As a result of the uncertainty surrounding pre-enclosure field boundaries, it is noted that though dry-stone walls may have been used on occasion (and perhaps most frequently within stone-rich upland areas), the specific location and extent of their use cannot be conclusively identified.

Investigations of pre-enclosure agricultural practices are closely associated with studies of various kinds of ‘field-systems’. The term ‘field-system’ refers to early patterns of landholding and husbandry, evident in much of rural Britain. As Dodgshon (1980)

explains, the nature of the field-system is based upon the intermixture of sub-divided parcels of land that are worked by members of the local rural community. Emphasising the role that field-systems play in the development of rural communities, Dodgshon goes on to describe field-systems as “the very essence of the rural community as a social, economic and territorial unit” (1980: 29). In addition to being interwoven with social and economic issues, Baker and Butlin (1973) note that physical, cultural and technological factors can also influence field-system development. As a result of these multiple influences, historical field-systems throughout Britain vary considerably, making generalisation difficult. Complicating the situation further, Baker and Butlin recognise that the quality and quantity of surviving evidence on field-systems varies both spatially and temporally. For example, they note that significant evidence exists for 13th century field-systems in Kent and East Anglia, but considerably less for those in northern parts of England.

Though specific agricultural practices vary considerably, one of the most common field-system reported in England is the open-field system. Dating from around the 9th century, the open-field system in its most simple form was two large communal fields situated at either side of a village (Hoskins 1985). These fields were cultivated in strips of approximately half an acre, with double furrows separating them, creating the classic ‘ridge and furrow’ pattern still etched into the geography of England’s Midlands today (Hoskins 1985). It is unclear whether large open fields were bounded in any permanent or semi-permanent way. However, given the name and that they continued to expand as the population of the village increased (Hoskins 1985), it seems unlikely. The open-field system remained for many decades, morphing into different practices that better served the physical, social and economic requirements of the nearby community.

Though much of the country remained in open-field system, by the 16th century parts of the land in the south of England were enclosed. The abundance of high quality pasture and grazing encouraged farmers to develop alternative and more profitable methods of farming, namely the rearing of cattle and sheep (Hoskins 1985). As has been noted previously, early livestock enclosures in the south east and west were likely to be hedgerows, given the area provided the correct physical and climatic conditions for their growth. In other parts of the country where growing conditions were less favourable, it is possible that dry-stone walls or a combination of stone and earthen banks were constructed. Examples of such features are the ‘head’ and ‘ring’ dykes found in parts of northwest England and Scotland. Though it appears that such dykes were still used as part of the communal open-field system, their purpose was to protect crops from trespassing livestock (Elliot 1973; Whittington 1973) or divide land from a neighbouring estate (Fenton and Leitch 2011).

The use of the term dyke might suggest such divisions were made of dry-stone, however this does not always appear to be the case. Their form varied geographically and according to the materials available. Whittington (1973) suggests that areas rich in stone may have had dry-stone boundaries, however it is noted that in places lime-mortar was also used (Fenton and Leitch 2011). Elsewhere they may have taken the form of a raised mound of earth onto which another protective structure was built (Elliot 1973), presumably of sufficient strength to prevent livestock entry or escape.

In Scotland from the late 15th century to the more widespread enclosures of the 18th century, the most common form of agricultural management was the infield/outfield system. Like practices in England, the infield/outfield model was based on communal farming methods that varied throughout the country according to specific circumstances (Dixon 2011). In simplest terms however, Whittington (1973) describes the infield as an area of land closest to the farmsteads, which was under permanent cultivation. The outfields, like the name implies, were located further from the farm buildings. Occasionally poorer in fertility or drainage, this land was used to graze livestock (Whittington 1973) or periodically cultivated to supplement infield produce (Dixon 2011). Once again, it is not clear what the boundaries between infield and outfield were constructed from, but as previously suggested, may have been a combination of readily available material such as stone, earth and turf. Other enclosures within this field-system include the occasional construction of 'folds' within the outfield area. Their purpose was to enclose livestock and thus allow a portion of the land to be fertilised by manure (Whittington 1973). It is likely that they were also built with a mix of stone, earth and turf. Notably however, it is suggested by Fenton and Leitch (2011) that they were designed as semi-permanent structures which, once degraded, allowed the construction of new folds in another area of the outfield requiring fertilisation. As mentioned previously, field systems (both in northern England and Scotland) were sometimes enclosed by a head dyke. According to Fenton and Leitch (2011), records dating from the 16th century relating to the construction of head dykes in Peebles and Dundee describe them as built in stone, though it is unclear whether this was dry or with lime-mortar.

In addition to the construction of dykes for agricultural use, in some parts of Scotland 'park' dykes were constructed around areas of aesthetic value, such as woodland, gardens or land used for recreational purposes (Fenton and Leitch 2011). Generally geometric in shape, they were also known to surround important houses, most likely those of the proprietor or other wealthy individuals (Whittington 1973). Fenton and Leitch (2011) refer to examples of park dyke construction in Stirling in 1501 and in Edinburgh in 1553. As

was the case with other dykes, park enclosures may have been built of stone, turf or a combination of various materials. Exemplified by the construction of park dykes, enclosures built in Scotland throughout the 16th and 17th centuries were generally built according to the desire of the land proprietor (Whittington 1973). In recognition of this, some historians suggest much of the enclosure around and within country estates was thought of as ‘fashionable’ by the wealthier landowners and thus inspired others to construct similar boundaries (Whittington 1973; Whittington 1983; Whyte 1983; Turner 1984; Smout 1998). By the late 17th century however, fad and fashion had given way to Parliamentary decree. Agricultural practices in Scotland were changing, though at different times and rates across the country. In 1695 two Scottish Acts of Parliament made it possible for proprietors to request that their land, some of which was communal ‘waste’ pasture, be enclosed (Whittington 1973).

In recognition of geographical and legal difference, the following section addresses parliamentary enclosure in Scotland and England separately, taking the case of Scotland first. The Scottish Acts of Parliament were introduced earlier than those in England and did not induce immediate agricultural change. The establishment of enclosures in Scotland varied geographically and temporally, with construction continuing throughout the 18th and into the 19th centuries.

Parliamentary Enclosure

As noted above, enclosure of agricultural land has featured in British landscape practice for many hundreds of years. However it was not until the late 17th century that parliamentary decree formalised and stimulated the enclosure process, resulting in the construction of many more field boundaries. Parliamentary enclosure is defined by Blomley as:

“The conversion of commonable lands, whether on wastes, commons, or village fields, into exclusively owned parcels, and the concomitant extinction of common rights, of which the most important was that of pasture.” (2007: 2)

The process of parliamentary enclosure affected all nations of the British Isles, though historical accounts refer principally to activities in Scotland and England. As enclosure narratives of Scotland and England differ significantly, it is necessary to address each individually. In the case of Scotland, the process of enclosure in the south-west is well described in the literature. Notably, the events in the south-west demonstrate how in addition to parliamentary acts, local economic opportunities, such as a growing cattle trade, also encouraged the construction of enclosures. During the late 17th century, a

burgeoning trade in cattle had developed in the south-west and dykes were built to enclose the growing numbers of livestock. This began as early as 1684 in Wigtownshire where Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon constructed several large enclosures to hold cattle prior to droving to England (Fenton and Leitch 2011). Though it is suggested that prior to the Union of 1707 the trade in cattle between Scotland and England was not entirely legal, many officials tolerated and turned a blind eye to many trading activities (Spratt 2011). It is therefore likely that the increasing trade in cattle inspired the construction of many enclosures in the south-west, as much, or even more so, than the announcement of the parliamentary acts in 1695.

In contrast to the period of turmoil following the Enclosure Acts in England,² the Scottish Acts did not inspire immediate or widespread agricultural upheaval (Fenton and Leitch 2011). Erection of enclosures was gradual and, as Whittington (1973) notes, communal farming continued for some time within the new hedged or walled fields. Elsewhere it has been suggested that tenant farmers were employed to build enclosures in exchange for the lease of land. Dry-stone dyke enclosures constructed in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright around 1710 are one example. It is said that the McKie family leased sections of their land to tenant farmers in exchange for the construction of dykes (Prevost 1957; Rainsford-Hannay 1957). Within a few short years, large areas of the McKie's land were enclosed with the result of increasing productivity and profit. In time, these early acts of formal enclosure inspired construction of additional enclosures elsewhere in the south-west. The construction of cattle enclosures continued, particularly following the 1707 union between Scotland and England when former restrictions on trade were removed (Spratt 2011). Once legal, cattle sold in England commanded a higher price, allowing breeders in the south-west of Scotland to capitalise on the improved economic situation (Coull 2011).

Undoubtedly the cattle trade and associated enclosures changed south-west Scotland in many ways. The physical legacy of the dykes enclosing cattle pastures were unique in construction³ and remain today as distinctive features of the landscape. In addition to physical landscape changes, the erection of enclosures had notable impact upon the social order of the population. Enclosures displaced many tenants and sub-tenants from land previously worked in the infield/outfield system (Campbell 2011). Unsurprisingly, these actions angered some members of the displaced population. Between 1723 and 1724 groups of individuals banded together in opposition and sought to revolt against their

² Official Parliamentary Enclosure in England was enacted at a later date than those in Scotland. It is suggested that the first notable interest in English enclosure began in the late 1750s and continued with varying impact until the mid 1800s (Mingay 1997).

³ For more information, see Chapter 4: 'Dry-Stone Wall Construction: Fundamentals and Variation' (p. 111)

eviction from the land (Prevost 1957). The groups, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, roved across parts of the south-west, over-throwing dykes and maiming cattle enclosed within them (Smout 1998). In light of their aims to ‘level’ the dykes, and thus restore the land to its former use as communal grazing, the groups were known as Levellers or dyke-breakers. In support of their activities and in demonstration of their political agenda, it is claimed the Levellers produced a manifesto demanding “justice for the poor and return of their holdings” (Smout 1998: 305).

Despite their political motivations, there is conflicting evidence that Levelling activity had any lasting impact on the agricultural changes of the south-west. Campbell (2011) suggests that despite increasing cattle trade, traditional forms of agriculture, such as the growing of grain continued in many parts of the region throughout the 18th century. Likewise, it has been noted previously by Whittington (1973) that communal farming practices continued alongside the construction of enclosures. Furthermore, it is suggested that in the wake of enclosures and eviction of tenant farmers, there was little evidence of population decline in the area (Campbell 2011). It is therefore implied that evicted farmers did not move from the region in search of land or employment elsewhere, but instead, remained within Galloway and the Borders and found work as tradesmen or farm labourers (Sprott 2011). Livingston (2009) suggests however that the activities of the Levellers *did* have an impact upon the development of the region throughout the 18th century, contending that a more cautious approach to agricultural improvement was adopted and that industrial settlements were created to provide employment to those evicted from the land. However, it may be possible to reconcile both points of view, at least to a degree. It is made clear by Livingston (2009) that the Galloway region was most affected by activities of the Levellers, however as Campbell (2011) argues, traditional forms of agriculture continued throughout the south-west, with little interference from the construction of enclosures. As a result of being most affected by the actions of the Levellers, it is suggested that the Galloway area, including Kirkcudbright and Wigtownshire, were likely to be more cautious in their approach to agricultural development.

Indeed, it appears that a measured and gradual approach to enclosure and agricultural development was evident in much of Scotland throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. As Whittington (1983) and Whyte (1983) note, the extent of enclosure varied significantly throughout Scotland and in comparison to the swift landscape changes in England, was a slower process. Specific landscape and agricultural developments in Scotland varied according to the often diverse physical environment and the wishes of the landowners.

Whittington describes the gradual developments as “evolutionary not revolutionary” (1973: 579), a process which “accommodated changes in the composition of society and agrarian practice without having to suffer the drastic upheaval which occurred with enclosure south of the border” (1973: 567). Though there may have been instances of revolt, such as those of the Levellers, it appears that generally, change enacted by enclosures occurred over a prolonged period of time and allowed for social and economic adjustment.

Turning to Parliamentary enclosure in England, it is necessary to remind that there were notable differences to the process occurring in Scotland. One of the primary differences being the swift and significant landscape changes enacted upon the passing of private enclosure Acts. However, as Turner (1984) notes, agricultural enclosure was not a new phenomenon. Prior to 1750, much enclosure had been carried out privately, between neighbouring landowners. Significant swathes of south-east and south-west England were enclosed several years before any official Acts were passed through Parliament. It is well understood that enclosure by Parliamentary Act was most common from 1750 to 1830 (Turner 1984; Hoskins 1985; Mingay 1997). Hoskins (1985) notes that between 1761 and 1844 in excess of 2500 Acts of Parliamentary enclosure were passed, which saw the bounding of approximately 4 million acres of open field. The landscapes of Midland counties such as Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire were changed significantly by Parliamentary enclosure (Hoskins 1985; McDonagh and Daniels 2012). In order to accommodate the new standard for smaller farm-steadings, it was common for new roads and farmhouses to be constructed in conjunction with the enclosures (Hoskins 1985). The realignment and improvement of roads further altered the landscape. In some places, new drainage systems were installed to transform marsh or moorland into more productive arable soils (Mingay 1997). Thus unlike in Scotland, where the pace of agrarian improvement and development was considered evolutionary, in contrast, the English process was described as revolutionary (Whittington 1973).

Hoskins (1985) further attributes the expeditious process of enclosure to the appointment of special commissioners, who ensured the process of enclosure followed the specifications of the Act and resolved any disputes. The commissioners had a great deal of control over the process and encouraged uniformity in all aspects of enclosure. Fields were generally square or rectangular in shape, of similar size where possible, creating a regimented, linear landscape bearing little resemblance to previous field boundaries (Hoskins 1985; McDonagh and Daniels 2012). The linear, uniform approach was also demonstrated in the construction of roads, where many cut straight across the country, often altering course at

right angles (Hoskins 1985). Commissioners also had control over methods of construction for the boundaries themselves. The following extract, provided by Raistrick (1961), is from a 1788 enclosures Act concerning the township of Grassington, North Yorkshire. It outlines the structural specifications for enclosure by dry-stone wall as requested by the commissioners:

“We do hereby Order and Award that the same shall be done by good stone Walls, in all places made 34 inches broad in the Bottom and 6 feet high, under a Stone not exceeding 4 inches in thickness, which shall be laid upon, and cover the Tops of the Walls in every Part, that there shall be laid in a Workmanlike Manner 21 good Throughs in every Rood of fence.” (Raistrick 1961: 12-13)⁴

This swift, regimented and extensive approach to enclosure unsurprisingly caused significant social upheaval. Though McDonagh and Daniels (2012) recognise that rights to common land were complex and therefore should not be over-simplified, it remains that systematic enclosure prevented many farmers from accessing common lands.

Compensation was extremely rare and left many individuals feeling aggrieved (Mingay 1997). The popular narrative of English enclosure therefore became one of “appropriation and dispossession” (McDonagh and Daniels 2012: 107), which threatened the cultural, political and social landscape of many locales.

Enclosure was not opposed in every region in which it was enacted. However, nor was protest unusual. In a comprehensive study of enclosure and common rights, Neeson (1993) clarifies that though riotous acts of protest are paid most attention by historians, in the first instance, opponents of enclosure often pursued legal means of protest. This included compiling petitions to present to Parliament and, for some landowners, a refusal to sign enclosure Bills (Neeson 1993). The legal process however was costly and therefore prohibitive to many in the lower, labouring classes. In lieu of an accessible legal process, opponents, fuelled by anger and injustice, instead resorted to illegal forms of protest (Neeson 1993). Like the activities of the Scottish Levellers, frequent forms of protest included the vandalism or breaking down of the newly erected fences, walls, ditches and hedges that bounded the former open fields.

As a form of property in themselves, enclosure fences had complex materialities; they were used to legitimate ownership of land but also acted as a material barrier to common access (Blomley 2007). Quite simply, enclosure fences were a form of exclusion and as such,

⁴ See Chapter 4: ‘Dry-stone Techniques’ (p. 113) for further explanation of the terms used in the extract.

were vulnerable to attack. To those dispossessed of land, the boundaries were symbolic of “making private what always had been public” (Mingay 1997: 53) and were seen as material “sites at which to contest enclosure” (McDonagh and Daniels 2012: 115). It was the intention of anti-enclosure movements to remove the hedge, either by digging, burning or burying and so allow access to the land once more (McDonagh and Daniels 2012). However, it is also suggested that the motives behind the removal of boundaries were complex. In light of the poverty that some individuals experienced following enclosure, Neeson (1993) suggests that hedge and fence breaking activities were combined with a specific need for fuel. Once a boundary was broken, the materials were taken by the protestors and used as firewood for heating their homes. Other motives were concerned with the wider social changes associated with enclosure. Both Neeson (1993) and Blomley (2007) note that enclosure greatly facilitated the division and growing separation of the social classes. The common field-system of the previous years, which had engineered a network of cooperation and support between various levels of society, disappeared with enclosure, forever changing the social geography of the English countryside (Neeson 1993). As Blomley suggests, to level a hedge (or wall) “signified the levelling of social distinction” (2007:14). Similarly, McDonagh and Daniels (2012) observe that protest against the restructuring of the countryside into a commercial enterprise was a motive for the breaking of enclosures. As a result, in locations where protest was most prominent, it can be said that opponents were not only fighting against a loss of livelihood, but a loss of the social, cultural and economic order which had structured rural lives for generations.

This section has addressed some of the key narratives associated with Parliamentary enclosure in Scotland and England. Though the enclosure process differed between both regions (primarily in the pace of implementation and scale of landscape change), there nonetheless remain some similarities. In both Scotland and England, the social and economic order changed following enclosure. Arguably however, Scotland proceeded in a more evolutionary manner in comparison to England (Whittington 1973). In England, a swift and regimented approach to enclosure divided the physical landscape into a strict geometric pattern, erasing not only evidence of earlier forms of agriculture, but also the livelihoods dependent on them. In England and Scotland, anti-enclosure movements incorporating dyke-levelling, hedge-breaking, burying or burning were all methods of protest intended to return access to the former grazing areas and by consequence, power to those dispossessed of land. As Blomley (2007) notes, the materiality of the enclosure fences made them strong signifiers of exclusion, but as a result, also marked them as site of conflict and violence. This contested history of enclosure draws attention to the political

and symbolic significance of walls and hedges and their role in effecting social, economic and cultural change. Though scholars such as Neeson (1993), Blomley (2007), Vasudevan *et al* (2008), McDonagh and Daniels (2012) and Oles (2015) expose and explore the political geographies of enclosure in greater detail, it is not the aim of this thesis to contribute to such discussions. However, in terms of the historical geographies of dry-stone walls, it has been important to place their materiality within the social, economic and political order of the time.

Despite the configuring of enclosure as dispossession, it is prudent to note that access to the countryside and existence of traditional ways of life were not completely eroded by enclosure. McDonagh and Daniels (2012) note that particular aspects of rural life, such as church services, village administration and pursuits like foxhunting were largely unaffected by enclosure. Though this may be accurate, it is unlikely that the rural poor, deprived of cultivable land and employment would experience the full benefit of such continuity. As a counter to more optimistic interpretations (McDonagh and Daniels 2012), Neeson (1993) is of the belief that the anger and sense of injustice felt by the enclosure protestor was often obscured by historical record and thus, at risk of being neglected by the historian. It is suggested here that the contemporary romantic image of the rural dry-stone wall also risks over-writing the stories behind their construction during the enclosure period. Walls were once thought of as symbols of exclusion and social injustice, a narrative that, as Naylor (2011) notes, has since been neglected.

The historical geographies of dry-stone walls in Britain date back to the 12th and 13th centuries when farmers built modest enclosures to contain their livestock. From this time until the period of Parliamentary enclosure in the late 17th century, enclosures of various shapes, sizes and styles were constructed throughout Scotland and England, according to the needs and desires of tenant farmers or landowners. The materials used for pre-Parliamentary enclosures were often unspecified within the literature and may have been built of dry-stone, hedge, ditch, earthen bank or a combination. It was therefore necessary to take a cautious approach when examining pre-enclosure agricultural systems as the terms dyke or enclosure did not necessarily refer to dry-stone constructions. Though it was not possible to identify specific locations in which dry-stone was used, the literatures described above demonstrate that dry-stone was certainly used in places to construct Parliamentary enclosure walls. The style of the early walls contrasted greatly with those assembled in the wake of Parliamentary Acts. Early walls were described by Garner (1984) as rustic or primitive in technique, built in irregular patterns, according to the specific needs of the farmer. In contrast, walls built during Parliamentary enclosure were

of uniform design, dividing the land into uncompromising geometric patterns, largely in response to political and economic agenda. As many such boundaries were substantial and robust in construction, a linear legacy remains visible across much of rural Britain today. In terms of wall construction, the linear pattern and regimented building techniques specified by enclosure commissioners became something of a benchmark, embedding political and economic histories within the materiality of walls.

Landscape Literatures

The concept of landscape is a key analytical theme within contemporary cultural geography (Cresswell 2003). The opening half of this chapter considers the growth of academic landscape inquiry from the detached, survey-led, materialist approach appropriated by Carl Sauer to the intimate, subjective nature of phenomenology. By engaging with ideas emerging in archaeology and anthropology, human geographers have moved beyond an observed, static landscape, filled with signs and symbols of power, to appreciate landscape as a 'structure of feeling'. In an effort to better illustrate and understand how we make places and feel like we belong in them, cultural geographers (and scholars in cognate subjects) are pushing beyond a representational model of appreciation to see (and hear and touch and smell) aspects of landscape that both *inform us* and are *informed by us* (Ingold 2000). Phenomenological approaches have provided a new baseline for examining landscape, and fuelled by theorists such as Nigel Thrift, Christopher Tilley and Tim Ingold, opened the way for new, creative ways to configure our place in the world.

The modern origins of landscape study in geography are commonly attributed to Carl Ortwin Sauer of the Berkeley School, California and his theories developed during the interwar years. Sauer understood landscape as a phenomenon influenced by human culture but thought it was possible to observe change from a distance and with an objective gaze (Wylie 2007). When observed and described in this fashion, landscape was the very essence of geographical inquiry. Reputedly detached in manner, Sauer's approach was still physically immersive. He recognised the centrality of fieldwork and the wealth of knowledge to be gained through first-hand observation (Wylie 2007). Contemporary approaches to landscape afford 'experiential being' in the field with a deeper sense of experience and participation, but it might be suggested that Sauer sowed seeds for observation as a respected method of research. Sauer's observations were however selective, and revealingly so. An interest in geomorphology and disenchantment with urban development led his studies to focus on the rural landscape (Wylie 2007). His

writing style was predominantly descriptive, rather than explanatory, leading James Duncan to criticise Sauer's work as lacking real understanding of the subtle, differentiated aspects of culture (Wylie 2007).

W.G. Hoskins can be considered a second 'father figure' of modern landscape study. Hoskins' approach was principally historical rather than geographical, concerned with local rural features and selective enough in sensibility to be judged nostalgic (Wylie 2007). Like Sauer, he appeared disenchanted and uninspired by urban development:

“It proved hard to find a piece of the original landscape amid the high-rise flats, the nondescript buildings in the renovated streets” (Hoskins 1978: 8)

Use of the term “original landscape” suggests that – despite an acute sense of temporality – Hoskins preferred to think of landscape as something static and unchanging. A historical focus meant that his work was notable in academic archaeology and history, as well as popular culture and in the late 1970s the BBC broadcast a television series *The Landscape of England* (Wylie 2007). Despite criticisms of nostalgia levelled at him, Hoskins' work speaks of the importance of history when documenting the production of landscape. Lorimer (2010) draws similarities between the work of Hoskins and performance studies scholar Mike Pearson (2006). He suggests both demonstrate a commitment to vernacular history where “raking over the material remains and graphic representations of landscape is a primary means to disinter aspects of the past” (Lorimer 2010: 263). Additionally, recent work on 'salvage memories' and 'anticipatory history' by DeSilvey (2006; 2007; 2011; 2012) might also be figured as an imaginative extension of Hoskins' approach. Furthermore, Wylie (2007) recognises that Hoskins' conservationist attitudes have influenced contemporary land use policy, again in a similar fashion to a proposal by DeSilvey:

“Those who make decisions about landscape futures need to be sensitive to how people know the past in place – the dense weave of individual memories, shared experiences, and personally significant landmarks that makes up our understanding of where we are and where we have been” (2011: 15)

The third landscape figurehead chosen to anchor this modern narrative of landscape is American scholar, J.B. Jackson. Not a geographer by training, Jackson was a cultural historian and popular writer, notable for editing *Landscape* magazine during the 1960s and

1970s (Wylie 2007). For Cresswell (2003), Jackson's approach reveals the tension involved in landscape study by describing places in terms of vision, but also providing critique by highlighting everyday lived practices that *make* landscapes. Like Sauer and Hoskins before him, Jackson was aware of the human influence on the land, but preferred to think of himself as active within it (Wylie 2007); guiding him towards a more participative view of landscape than Sauer or Hoskins would comfortably admit. With his concern for the experience of being in the land and regard for seeing as an embodied practice, Jackson took a step towards participative observation in landscape studies (Cresswell 2003). His opinions were not founded on static appreciation. Another advocate of fieldwork, Jackson travelled widely throughout the US, writing from the perspective of a mobile observer (Cresswell 2003). His own wanderlust resonates with contemporary theories of how people develop worldly knowledge by living along paths and communicating associated stories (Ingold 2007a). For Cresswell (2003), Jackson is a significant figure in geographical landscape theory for the encouraged offer to fellow researchers, particularly humanistic geographers, to see landscapes from an individual perspective.

In the 1980s a distinctive iconographic approach to landscape studies was introduced by geographers Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (1988). Landscape as a 'way of seeing' was broadly inclined toward Marxist theory, framing landscape as a spatially organised and socially controlled spectacle (Merriman *et al* 2008). Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) aligned perspective and 'seeing' with regimes of social power and control associated with elite and privileged society, often designed as a means to affirm or solidify existing class structures.

When Daniels and Cosgrove state that "a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings" (1988: 1) it is externalised from the midst of everyday life, and figured as an observable phenomenon. They encourage readers to picture a landscape painting, something fabricated and designed by the artist. Such an interpretive approach risks denying the individuals' perspective of landscape that Jackson worked towards. Arguably, in more powerful terms than those proposed by Sauer or Hoskins, Daniels and Cosgrove sought to visualise the human landscape and in doing so, further separate the distinctive realms of nature and culture (Wylie 2007).

More recently, academics from various disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, cultural geography and performance studies have engaged with the idea of landscape in a variety of ways that further develop J.B. Jackson's case for landscape as a milieu of social

practice. Adopting what can broadly be labelled a phenomenological (or experiential) approach, academics have moved away from a distanced, static interpretation of the material landscape, instead focussing upon the embodied encounters and sensory engagements that constitute being-in-the-world (Cresswell 2003). Primarily concerned with questions of subjectivity (Tilley 2004), phenomenology is intended to describe the nature of experience as closely as possible. In the section to follow, my focus turns to the work of landscape theorists for whom a phenomenological perspective is key in understanding how people create, live within and make sense of the places that surround them. Notions of embodiment and sensory engagement with the world are fundamental to a phenomenological appreciation of landscape and are thus afforded greatest attention. In terms of dry-stone walling practice and the process of becoming familiar with stone, bodily and sensory engagement are highly significant. As Cresswell (2003) notes, when habitual movement is established, we do not consciously think of our actions. Rather, a form of consciousness is constructed through the intermediary of the body. In an effort to understand the embodied and sensory aspects of being-in-the-world, academics have recently engaged with social theories of practice. When considered alongside a phenomenological approach to landscape, an analysis of practice has allowed geographers and other academics to focus on the lived, embodied and temporal aspects of landscape study (Cresswell 2003). Examples of recent work on landscape practice shall be noted and situated within what some cultural geographers consider a 'post-phenomenological' (Ash and Simpson 2014; Wylie and Rose 2006) approach to landscape inquiry.

In further sections to follow, other methods of conceptualising landscape and practice are explored. These include theories relating to dwelling, initially developed by Heidegger and revisited by anthropologist Tim Ingold. In *The Perception of the Environment*, Ingold (2000) describes practices and tasks that are constitutive of dwelling as 'the taskscape'. Various ordinary and unusual practices are considered part of the taskscape, including dry-stone walling. My focus then turns to the relationship between body and material. Here, attention is paid to the necessity of a receptive and responsive body-and-mind during physical interactions with material objects. The section concludes with an overview of the more-than-representational (Lorimer 2005) aspects of landscape encounter. In so doing, it contextualises the examples of landscape practice and performance noted earlier in the chapter and introduces the ways in which contemporary cultural geographers are seeking to engage with landscape beyond conventional methods of representation. In journeying through each of these theoretical fields, I construct ideas about the walling craft that are consistent with a contemporary phenomenological approach.

Landscape Phenomenology

Geographers have been interested in phenomenological theory since the 1970s. To humanistic geographers, phenomenology offered an alternative to scientifically driven positivism, developing “ideas and languages to describe and explain the human experience of nature, space and time” (Buttimer 1976: 278 in Ash and Simpson 2014: 1). Established in the early 20th century by German philosopher Edmund Husserl, the philosophy of phenomenology is founded upon a style or manner of thought, rather than a set of procedures (Tilley 2004). It is concerned with human subjectivity and as such, sits in direct contrast with empiricist and positivist methods of engaging with the world. As explained by Tilley:

“[Phenomenology] attempts to reveal the world as it is actually experienced directly by a subject as opposed to how we might theoretically assume it to be. The aim is not to explain the world (in terms, say, of physical causality or historical events or psychological dispositions) but to describe that world as precisely as possible in the manner in which human beings experience it” (2004: 1).

Phenomenology therefore pays attention to the subjective description of worldly experience, rather than reducing engagement to objectivity and explanation. Since its origin in Husserlian thought, phenomenology has been variously interpreted by different philosophers including Heidegger, Sartre and most importantly for the framing of discussions within this thesis, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (Tilley 2004). The theories established by Merleau-Ponty throughout his career remain influential in contemporary social theory, worked through in a range of disciplines including archaeology, anthropology, cultural geography and performance studies (Cresswell 2003). The main feature distinguishing the ideas of Merleau-Ponty from the earlier works of Husserl is the emphasis placed on embodiment (Carolan 2008). In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (2002) introduces the idea of a mind and body entwined, and where worldly experiences are understood through such a connection. According to Merleau-Ponty, humans are directly linked to the world by our physicality and through bodily sensitivity. In short, we are able to make sense of things, places and landscapes (Tilley 2004). Wylie (2007) describes this as the ‘body-subject’, an “always-already-incarnate subjectivity, a self inseparable from its embodiment” (2007: 148). Writing at a time when academic inquiry was becoming more intensely concerned with the feeling body, Harrison (2000) and Thrift (2000) are in accord about the significance of embodiment and its relation to non-cognitive actions:

“I claim that the unthought in thought revolves around embodiment. Our embodiment is implicated in everything we see or say” (Harrison 2000: 497)

Thrift considers non-cognitive thought as “embodied dispositions” which simultaneously “describe aspects of the world and prescribe possible actions” (2000: 36). In focusing attention on the body, the possibility and potential for worldly engagement is significantly amplified. For Carolan (2008), the idea that potential emerges from foldings of embodied activity is a central tenet of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy. An engaged body-and-mind thus allows for an improved system of understanding and appreciation of worlds and practices. *Through* the body, worldly knowledge can be collected and synthesised in a variety of ways: by touch, smell, sight, taste and sound. If as Thrift suggests, humans take seriously the ability to learn-by-doing, we must first “refigure what we count as thought and knowledge” (2000: 36-37). This can mean a heightened awareness of the ways through which we learn skills and practices. As such, the non-conscious realm – inklings, automatisms and reflexive actions – becomes increasingly important (Thrift 2000).

By encountering these ‘embodied dispositions’, the mechanisms by which the body relates to the world can be subject to consideration. For Serres, it is through the senses that the body interacts with the environment:

“...the senses are nothing but the mixing of the body, the principal means whereby the body mingles with the world and itself.” (Serres 2008: 3)

This focus upon the senses advances Merleau-Ponty’s earlier proposition (2002) for an embodied phenomenology. Indeed, Serres has suggested there is an element of “bodilessness” (Ash and Simpson 2014: 7) to the writings of Merleau-Ponty and that *The Phenomenology of Perception* contains “lots of phenomenology and no sensation – everything via language” (Serres and Latour 1995: 131-2 in Ash and Simpson 2014: 7). In advocating a fully embodied and sensuous appreciation of the world, Serres resists the classical sub-division of the five senses. He notes how many philosophers refer only to sight, few to hearing and fewer still to the remaining senses. The implications are immediate: partitioning the sentient body, while remaining ignorant of the relations between the senses. Quite simply, for Serres, to consider the senses in abstract “means to tear the body to pieces” (2008: 26). While writing on matters of landscape and place, Tilley notes a comparable overlapping, or fusion, of the senses:

“Perception involves the simultaneous use of the senses. In considering landscape and place, we participate in the world in such a manner that we do not distinguish

between the visual, audible, olfactory, etc. They impinge on us and contribute to our experience all at once.” (2004: 14)

Tilley describes this competency as synaesthesia: a blending of the senses. This fusion explains the reported ability to ‘see sounds’ and ‘hear colours’ often associated with particular psychological traits, and can also be conceived of as our “primordial pre-conceptual experience of the world” (2004: 14). To elaborate, Tilley describes eating a meal – the taste of the food is simultaneously combined with touch, smell and appearance, the combination of which is impossible to divide; “to truly know is to feel and perceive through all of the senses” (2004: 15).

In order to apprehend the embodied and sensory aspects of ‘being in the world,’ contemporary geographical approaches to phenomenology have enrolled theories of practice (Ash and Simpson 2014). These are often configured as landscapes of practice, where embodied tasks and activities characterising diverse engagements with the environment are studied. Such practices are not symbolic or mystic, but include familiar embodied cultural practices such as walking, driving, looking, cycling, climbing and gardening (Wylie 2007). Contemporary geographical interest in landscape practice owes much to the advent of non-representational theories,⁵ at the vanguard of which was geographer Nigel Thrift. Put simply, non-representational theories seek to better cope with our “more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds” (Lorimer 2005: 83). In tandem, phenomenological and non-representational theory have inspired a significant change in approach to landscape inquiries. Representations of landscape, place, nature and the body have been subsumed by an interest in practice and performance (Wylie 2007). Contemporary cultural geographers have directed attentions towards the “*practices* of landscape and especially, towards simultaneous and ongoing shaping of self, body and landscape via practice and performance” (Wylie 2007: 166, original emphasis).

Reviewing the interdisciplinary nature of recent landscape inquiry, Cresswell (2003) suggests that a shared interest in practice also stems from recent work in archaeology and material culture studies. Archaeologists Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley propose a new way of looking at material culture informed by theories of practice, where landscape is constituted through:

⁵ Though non-representational and more-than-representational theories shall be considered in greater detail in the section entitled ‘Landscape Practice, Performance and the More-Than-Representational’ (p. 54) they have been introduced here to help illustrate the development of phenomenological inquiry within cultural geography.

“Practices [which] over time become embedded in the world and leave traces of varying degrees of solidity, opacity or permanence” (Shanks and Tilley 1992: 131 in Cresswell 2003: 278).

In order to enliven these traces, archaeologists have become less concerned with looking, and more interested in the embodied experience of the land (Cresswell 2003). Though a demonstrable advocate of landscape practice, Cresswell initially considered it to be something of an oxymoron. As noted earlier in this chapter, historically landscape has been thought of as a fixed image and a way of framing landscape perspectives. By way of contrast, practice is seen as “unfixed and unfixable” (Cresswell 2003: 275). Though figured at first as a seemingly incompatible partnership, Cresswell suggests that a conjoined theory of landscape practice has the potential to enrich our understanding of human and environmental relations. When also encompassing a phenomenological approach, he proposes that landscapes of practice allow “an injection of temporality and movement into the static at the same time as practice is contextualised and given a frame” (Cresswell 2003: 280). Additionally, Wylie and Rose (2006) identify a tension within landscape practice, a tension that should ultimately be embraced and explored:

“The aim is to animate landscape studies by bringing this tension to the fore...by going beyond the traditional tensions of landscape studies; culture and nature, power and resistance, material and ideal, in order to explore the more cryptic tension of being ‘of’, ‘in’ and ‘on’ the world all at the same time” (Wylie and Rose 2006: 477).

If we are to accept the invitation to investigate landscapes of practice, it is therefore necessary to accommodate these tensions.

In recent years, the appreciation of these tensions within landscape practice has inspired a way of engaging with the world that goes beyond conventional phenomenological investigation. They have become *post*-phenomenological in nature. Though Ash and Simpson (2014) admit that there is currently no explicit articulation of what distinguishes post-phenomenology from the theories of phenomenology, they suggest the term first came into use in the philosophy of Dan Idhe. For Idhe, post-phenomenology is a way of escaping the subject-centred nature of classical phenomenological thought (Ash and Simpson 2014). In cultural geography, the term has been interpreted rather more flexibly. As well as drawing attention to materiality and relations between objects, Wylie (2005) and Wylie and Rose (2006) have developed an approach to phenomenology that goes beyond a model of subject intentionality (Ash and Simpson 2014). Though some may observe that work is still to be done to distinguish post-phenomenology from its classical

origins, it may also be suggested that to do so risks limiting the scope of post-phenomenological enquiry. As Ash and Simpson note post-phenomenology is “about refiguring and expanding phenomenological analytic and conceptual boundaries” (2014: 16) and thus to insist on clarification of these boundary limits may compromise the integrity of post-phenomenological thought. Post-phenomenology is about going *beyond* the subject-orientated approaches associated with classical phenomenology and, according to Wylie, describing landscape “in terms of the entwined materialities and sensibilities *with which* we act and sense” (2005: 245, original emphasis).

This section has introduced the shifting philosophical configurations of phenomenology, from its origins with Edmund Husserl to its reconfiguration and use within contemporary forms of geographical landscape study. Initially concerned with the embodied and sensory aspects of lived experience, more recent examples of phenomenological enquiry have drawn attention to the practices involved in the creation of landscape. In taking theories of landscape practice forward, it is necessary to acknowledge and appreciate the tensions of being ‘in’, ‘of’ and ‘on’ the world all at the same time (Wylie and Rose 2006).

Landscapes are therefore not considered to be external objects, but sites of dwelling (Cresswell 2003). The idea of dwelling is thus conceptualised as a form and method of exploring landscape practice. In the following section attention turns to opening up the notion of dwelling more fully, noting its philosophical origins in Heideggerian thought, and how it has come to be reconfigured in the anthropological theories of Tim Ingold.

Dwelling and the Taskscape

The current conceptualisation of dwelling exceeds the commonplace definition for a shelter or place of residence. Although the theory of dwelling is rooted in the idea of making a home, complete meaning is not exhausted here. In the first instance, dwelling is more than a passive experiential condition in which people have limited power, and rather it is figured as a generative “mode of human practice” (Rose 2012: 757) associated with being-in-the-world. It is of a piece with ideas of practice that are based around a subjective, embodied and sensual appreciation of surroundings. Theories of practice recognise that humans are capable of shaping, and in turn, being shaped by the environment. Relatedly, dwelling is understood to be the set of practices by which humans make themselves and the world around them known. Conceptualised as a form of landscape practice, dwelling has been closely associated with the process of building by a variety of academics, including geographers (Cloke and Jones 2001; Harrison 2007; Rose 2012), anthropologists (Ingold 2000), archaeologists (Tilley 2004) and architects (Seamon

1993). Though my aim here is not to debate the precise nature of the relationship between dwelling and building, it is essential to note, following Heidegger, that “to build is in itself already to dwell” (Heidegger 1975: 146).

The theory of dwelling is primarily associated with Heidegger’s seminal essay ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’, appearing in *Poetry, Language, Thought*. For Heidegger it is not possible to consider building and dwelling as altogether separate entities, rather they are related to each other as end and means:

“We do not dwell because we have built, but we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are dwellers” (Heidegger 1975: 148).

According to Heidegger, to be human is to dwell; we are all dwellers and thus builders, both metaphorically and physically. It is through dwelling that we engage with space, and consequently, allow it to shape our lives. More recently, Heidegger’s concept of dwelling has been revisited by Tim Ingold, an interpretation with a definite landscape dimension, and so relevant to the selected themes for this study. For Ingold, landscapes are produced throughout time by acts of dwelling. Figured thus, landscape is:

“Constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves” (Ingold 2000: 189).

Ingold’s idea of landscape is similar to Shanks’ and Tilley’s conceptualisation, where practices, associated with everyday life and work, are embedded within and constitutive of landscape, leaving behind traces of their existence. As Shanks and Tilley (1992) note, such traces may have varying degrees of solidity, opacity or permanence, reflecting the passing of time. Ingold shares comparable views on what he refers to as ‘the temporality of landscape’ and associated dwelling practices. Unlike the pictorial tradition of landscape representation advanced by Cosgrove and Daniels, Ingold considers landscape a generative phenomena, subject to continual change:

“Building, then, is a process that is continually going on, for as long as people dwell in an environment” (Ingold 2000: 188)

To illustrate the multiplicity of dwelling practices, Ingold introduced the idea of the ‘taskscape’. Fundamentally temporal in nature, tasks are “constitutive acts of dwelling” (2000: 195) which work to “carry forward the process of social life” (2000:194). Within this framework, dry-stone walling can be considered one such ‘task’. Wallers, whether

working together or individually, share knowledge of building experiences and by using artefacts of the land, produce a substantial feature enabling others to live differently than they did prior to the wall's construction. The construction of agricultural boundary walls is a case in point, significantly changing the way in which communities interacted with the land that was a part of where they lived. Dry-stone walls made it possible to define new patterns of land ownership, as well as allowing alternative methods of agricultural practice. The erection of dry-stone walls altered the social, economic and cultural fabric of much of Britain's rural landscape. However, it is important to note that the practice of walling and subsequent wall features, were not the only instruments within such social and environmental change. Ingold draws attention to the network or "ensemble" (2000: 195) of activities within the taskscape. Therefore, the process of walling which had such dramatic impacts in the countryside of the 18th and 19th centuries was a part of a much larger taskscape. Perhaps most prominent within this network of 'tasks' are changes in legal conditions, enacted through the introduction of enclosure legislation. However, enclosure practices were also influenced by social, economic, cultural and religious changes during the same period. In using the example of historical walling practice, it is therefore possible to elucidate Ingold's meaning of the taskscape. Practices and activities constituting the taskscape cannot be considered in singularity. They are part of a complex milieu, one that is temporal *and* embodied. It is also through this notion of the taskscape that Ingold comes to understand the landscape as an enduring record of the "lives and works of past generations" (2000: 189). He does not consider this record to be an inscription upon the land, and rather as woven into its fabric:

"Human beings do not, in their movements inscribe their life histories upon the surface of nature as do writers upon their page; rather, these histories are woven, along with the life-cycles of plants and animals, into the texture of the surface itself" (Ingold 2000: 198).

As a result of this 'weaving', the landscape emerges through the taskscape, inviting our understanding of it as an ever evolving, work in progress. Although few new agricultural walls are built today, the modification, repair and indeed decay of these walls remain constitutive of the landscape. Additionally, ornamental dry-stone features, constructed using the same techniques as agricultural walls, are a contemporary realisation of the walling taskscape. The histories of early dry-stone wall construction are imbued within modern-day features and reminds us of the temporality of the landscape, where the "past and future are co-present" (Cloke and Jones 2001: 652).

The significance of human *and* non-human life is also fundamental to Ingold's notion of the taskscape, where the movements and lifecycles of humans, plants and animals are woven into its texture. Ingold's version of embodiment is one where we humans "do not act upon it, or do things to it; rather we move along with it" (2000: 200). This processual approach dissolves the dichotomy of nature and culture evident within other academic conceptualisations of landscape, such as those proposed by Cosgrove and Daniels, seeking instead to emphasise how through the act of dwelling, bodily movements are *incorporated* within the landscape, rather than inscribed in this way, we can begin to understand how landscape "becomes a part of us, just as we are a part of it" (Ingold 2000: 191).

The concept of dwelling and the taskscape has been influential in geography, and a range of cognate subjects (Wylie 2007; Rose 2012). Some concern has been expressed at the assumptions intrinsic to its logic. For Cloke and Jones, the notion of dwelling can be premised upon understandings of place which are "fixed and unidimensional" and "overly cosy" or even "romantic" (2001: 650). Dwelling is thus founded upon an idea of a bounded local space, emphasising stability and familiarity between place and participants. They suggest an adaptation of Ingold's dwelling perspective to more adequately conceptualise the lively and flexible conditions of modern living:

"If dwelling is to be a serviceable concept for contemporary landscapes, it needs to shed this reliance on idyllic local boundedness and instead reflect a view of space and place which is dynamic, overlapping, and interpenetrating" (Cloke and Jones 2001: 661)

What Cloke and Jones suggest here is not an entire overhaul of Ingold's approach to dwelling. Rather, they suggest its application to more contemporary configurations of landscape. Despite this critique, Cloke and Jones welcome the concept for helping to account for the intense, intimate and rich dimensions of being in the world. Dwelling, they suggest, is also a means to highlight the performativity and non-representation within landscape inquiry and as such, is attractive to those interested in the relationship between landscape and place. Having been first introduced earlier in the chapter, more-than-representation theories and scholarly interests in practice and performance are explored in greater detail in the following section.

Landscape Practice, Performance and the More-Than-Representational

In the past two decades cultural geography has witnessed a shift in focus away from representations of landscape, and towards to its practice and performance. This shift owes

much to the emergence of non-representational theories (NRT) and the founding influence of Nigel Thrift (1996; 1997). Thrift's project was rooted in a critique of the prevailing constructivist approach in 'new' cultural geography (Wylie 2007). As Anderson and Harrison explain, social constructivism:

“Looks to how the symbolic orders of the social (or the cultural) realise themselves in the distribution of meaning and value, and thereby reinforce, legitimate and facilitate unequal distributions of goods, opportunities and power” (2010: 4)

Constructivist theories are therefore primarily concerned with modes of representation and symbolic cultural meaning. For Thrift, the focus upon representation was unsatisfactory since it took “precedence over lived experience and materiality” (Thrift 1996: 4 in Wylie 2007: 163). The constructivist approach, he observed, drained the very life from those things being studied, reducing nature (and landscape) to the status of social constructs at one remove. As Wylie (2007) notes, everyday life, embodied experience and practice was relegated to secondary status (at best) when the primary focus fell on cultural discourse and social meaning. As an alternative to this restrictive outlook, Thrift drew attention to those dimensions of everyday life that we struggle to explain within the framework of social order and meaning. Such non-representational phenomena are the focus for the nominative theory, and an insistence that the root of action be “conceived less in terms of willpower or cognitive deliberation and more via embodied and environmental affordances, dispositions and habits” (Anderson and Harrison 2010: 7).

The move to apprehend embodied affordances and habits does not necessarily mean ignoring or dismissing representational forms. As Carolan points out:

“Representations tell only part of the story, yet they still have a story to tell, however incomplete” (2008: 412)

Therefore, in order to better acknowledge representations *and* the world beyond, Lorimer (2005: 84) offered the term “more-than-representational” (MTR) as a more accurate and inclusive amendment. By the addition of ‘more-than’, he meant to “expand our once comfortable understanding of ‘the social’ and how it can be regarded as something researchable” (Lorimer 2005: 84). In expanding these horizons it is then possible to better understand how life is made meaningful through shared experiences, embodied movements, practical skills and affective intensities (Lorimer 2005). Acts of representation, including speaking, writing and drawing, are understood by NRT (and MTR) to be “*in* and *of* the world of embodied practice and performance, rather than taking

place outside of that world, or being anterior to, and determinative of that world” (Wylie 2007: 164 original emphasis). As a result, academics across a range of disciplines have revisited landscape practice and performance from both epistemological and methodological viewpoints. For example, Cresswell draws our attention to archaeologist Michael Shanks and performance artist Mike Pearson, whose work aims to “illuminate [a] particular landscape” (Cresswell 2003: 278). In his own words, Mike Pearson (2006) looks upon landscape as a ‘biographic encounter’, where individuals create landscapes and correspondingly, are created by them. Dovetailing with Ingold, Pearson draws attention to the temporality of landscape by reflecting on how memories and past experiences of places have shaped the person he has become. In an exploration of what familiar landscapes and places mean to him, Pearson does what more-than-representational theorists ask, and turns it into a practice. In “Bubbling Tom”, he turns the act of remembrance into a form of landscape practice by leading a public walk around the landscape of his childhood and engaging in site-specific performances.

Both separately and together, cultural geographers Wylie and Lorimer have also experimented with feats of landscape performance (Wylie 2005; Lorimer and Wylie 2010; Lorimer 2012). In doing so, they have sought to write about lived experiences in a more creative and evocative way. Stylistic experiments the likes of these make a deliberate break away from the orthodoxies of academic prose, instead seeking to capture the essence of embodied practice and performance. Photo-essays, travelogues, prose-poetry, ethnographies, story-telling and life-writing are alternative ways in which we can explore the nuances involved in making sense of place (Lorimer 2008b). In his own writing, Wylie (2010) draws inspiration and guidance from contemporary examples of landscape writing, Robert Macfarlane, Tim Robinson and Richard Mabey notable among them. Their work retains scholarly and critical values while aiming at suitability and accessibility across a range of disciplines and reading publics. For Wylie, these writers succeed in communicating the more “holistic and transcendent messages about our relationship with land, with other creatures, and with our own vexed histories” (2010: 111) and in doing so, bring readers closer to the multiplicities of the world, beyond that which can easily be represented. Wylie also draws inspiration from the way in which these authors approach their own subjectivities and narratives. In his writing, Wylie articulates his own interested uncertainty about the role of the subject, recognising that in Tim Robinson’s work in particular that “there is relatively little questioning of the writing subject here; in each case the narrative is very much that of a given self, still there in conclusion” (2010: 111). Wylie remains mindful of the difficulties of the academic to write creatively beyond accepted

subject positions. In further consideration of the place of creative writing within academic inquiry, it has been suggested that poetic and expressive style presents a challenge to those within the academy. Cresswell (in Merriman *et al* 2008) suggests that in the absence of the standard academic structure examining a series of points, such articles can be “hermetically sealed, beautifully written stories” (2008: 196), making traditional scholarly intervention difficult. In advancing the argument, Cresswell is uncertain of the way forward from this seeming impasse, suggesting that engagement with these more poetic forms of writing is simply different, based on a more aesthetic or emotional kind of interaction. It is therefore perhaps it is necessary for the readership to become flexible in their habits of engaging and receiving. This thesis makes steps towards encouraging new forms of creative interaction through the use of hand-drawn field-sketches.⁶ It is intended that the drawings allow for an open encounter with creative forms of knowledge gained beyond that which can be easily represented in writing.

Material Encounters

The term ‘material culture’ is defined by Wylie as an “expression and negotiation of cultural, political and economic relationships via the material world of objects” (Wylie in Gregory *et al* 2009: 448). More specifically, Wylie goes on to describe how cultural values and beliefs gain significance through the formation and expression of material objects such as buildings, artefacts, commodities and visual symbols. These inquiries have subsequently led to critical thinking about the *materiality* of culture itself, where scholars question how “cultural values are materially produced and circulated” (Wylie in Gregory *et al* 2009: 448). Though often first associated with anthropology and archaeology, material culture studies are increasingly engaged and interpreted through human geography and sociology. Anderson and Wylie note the emergence of conference sessions and published literature seeking to “rematerialise” (2009: 318) many branches of the discipline, including historical, tourism or practice-based geographies. From within these ‘re-turns’, a different way of conceptualising materiality emerged. Drawing inspiration from Actor Network Theory (ANT), this new approach to materiality sought to:

“Overcome a traditional dualism in which matter is viewed as dead and inanimate and can only be given meaning and form via conduits of human thought” (Wylie in Gregory *et al* 2009: 448).

In focussing instead on the agency and liveliness of materials, it has become possible to conceive them as “co-constitutive of their geographies, places, sites and spaces” (Tolia-

⁶ See Chapter 3: ‘Commentary on (Field) Drawings’ (p. 94) for more information.

Kelly 2011: 154). In *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett does much to explain this position. Humans, she contends, when no longer in direct contact with materials, or able to perceive their affects, are apt to ignore the “vitality of matter and the lively power of material formations” (2010: vii). In using the term ‘vitality’, Bennett means:

“The capacity of things – edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own” (2010: viii).

As a political theorist, Bennett is especially concerned with how political situations may change if greater attention is paid to the agency and force of materials. She suggests consideration of how patterns of consumption may change if we “faced not litter, rubbish, trash, or ‘the recycling’, but an accumulating pile of lively and potentially dangerous matter” (2010: viii). Bennett’s approach to materiality is therefore concerned with re-thinking how things and humans overlap with each other. Anderson and Tolia-Kelly (2004) note that within geography, a re-thinking of things and objects in relation to the concept of landscape are key methods in which academics have sought to engage with materiality.⁷ In respect of dry-stone walling, the vitality of stony material and its capacity to influence the construction of the wall is significant. More specifically, it is the force(s) within, and of, the stone which direct the actions of the waller, thereby demonstrating the agency of the material itself. Chapter 6 will explore how with time and experience, the waller becomes ever more familiar with the forces of the material and is able to use them to great effect. In this case, the human is not able to change the force of the stone, but with an increasing depth of knowledge, is able to adapt his or her actions to better respond to agency of the material. A good dry-stone craftsperson therefore appreciates the vitality of stone and works alongside the material, rather than in ignorance of it.

Within material studies of anthropology and archaeology, the term materiality is also commonly employed. Ingold (2007b) considers the term in its current usage, complex and confusing. Contemporary materiality, he argues is very often too far removed from the materials themselves:

“Their engagements are not with the tangible stuff of craftsmen and manufacturers but with the abstract ruminations of philosophers and theorists” (2007b: 2)

⁷ For examples see Bingham (1996); Cook and Crang (1996); Jackson (2000) and more recently, DeSilvey (2007); Edensor (2011).

Being disconnected from the study of materials in production, Ingold suggests, makes materiality a kind of “illusion” (2007b: 7), which cannot be touched or held in one’s hand. Working in the anthropological tradition, Ingold is primarily interested in learning about the material composition of the world by engaging directly with practices such as the sawing of logs, the building of walls or stone knapping. Taking this approach, the process of doing and making is given priority. In terms of recent engagement with material culture however, Ingold is concerned about the level of attention given to the consumption of objects and materials. By focussing on the consumption of objects, it is suggested that we are at risk of overlooking not only the process of *becoming* an object, but also the capacity of the material object to change:

“The materials are still there and continue to mingle and react as they have always done, forever threatening the things they comprise with dissolution or even ‘dematerialization’” (Ingold 2007b: 9)

This process of dissolution or change of which Ingold speaks bears similarity to the vitality of materials described by Bennett. Ingold recognises that materials possess forces beyond which humans have control and in themselves are “active constituents of a world-in-formation” (2007b: 11). This idea of temporality, change and decay is also reminiscent of his taskscape concept, as well as wider conceptualisations of landscape. Ingold’s appeal is to take *materials* and their properties seriously, (rather than their *materiality*). For Tilley (2007), the concept of materiality goes beyond ‘brute’ material properties to consider their relevance to people’s social lives. In putting this definition into context, he uses stone as an example:

“To consider the materiality of stone...is to consider its social significance, the stone as meaningful, as implicated in social acts and events and the stories of people’s lives, in both the past and present” (2007: 18)

The approach is considered at length in *The Materiality of Stone*, where Tilley pays attention to the ‘brute’ properties of stone, as well as various social meanings. This perspective is especially helpful in my conceptualisation of dry-stone walling, where walls are understood to be replete in social, cultural and economic history. Outside of this intellectual context, walls could be considered inert, even tedious, inattentive to the meaningful social relations associated with walling technique and tradition. Indeed it was noted in Chapter 2 that specific construction techniques were commonly outlined by official enclosure commissioners, an example of an act borne of agricultural policies of the time. In turn, such policies were the result of changing economic, political and social

opinions. Therefore to establish a thorough appreciation of the materiality of walls it is necessary to consider, as Tilley suggests, their social and historical significance. Though Ingold calls for materiality to pay greater attention to material properties and the process of becoming object, it is suggested here that this should not be done at the expense of an appreciation of the social context. For this thesis, consideration of both material properties and their wider relation to human activity is essential. In addition, as suggested by Bennett (2010) and Ingold (2007b), it is also necessary to recognise the force and agency of matter itself. The material encounter with stone and other landscape elements associated with the walling craft therefore becomes figured as a negotiation between matter and person, in a way which does not seek to prioritise one over the other. In the following section, my attention turns to things that happen during such negotiations, notably engagements which give rise to feelings of emotional and physical wellbeing, or potentially its opposites.

Health and Wellbeing

The first reference to wellbeing in terms of health was made in 1948 by the World Health Organisation (WHO), when it was stated that health was not simply based on an absence of disease or illness, but about a state of mental, physical and social wellbeing (WHO 1948). Despite the early use of the term, Fleuret and Atkinson (2007) note that it was not until the 1990s that wellbeing was used seriously in respect to health. In the years since, the concept of wellbeing has allowed for illness and health to be understood in different ways, redirecting a focus onto what promotes and protects health, rather than what causes illness (Cattell *et al* 2008). This re-conceptualisation has been particularly important and useful for health geographers as it provides a non-medically focused notion of health, appreciating the various “social and spatial relations and contexts that shape the experiences of life” (Hall 2010: 275). Though opening up approaches to health, the concept of wellbeing does not necessarily simplify matters. It has been recognised that the comprehensive and potentially subjective nature of wellbeing means it can be difficult to define, identify and measure (Fleuret and Atkinson 2007). Predictably, such issues can cause difficulties about how the concept is helpfully integrated into health policies. As an example, it has been noted by Hall that policy documents often comprise a “narrowly conceived” definition of wellbeing that are “tagged onto” (2010: 276) statements about health, with the intention of broadening the scope to consider mental and emotional health. In direct response to such concerns, Hall (2010) goes on to clarify the potential outcomes of a positive sense of wellbeing, including, but not limited to: an improved sense of belonging, safety and continuity, all of which may contribute to greater feelings of

individual empowerment, agency and confidence. Other authors have also attempted to distil the essence of the term and uncover the experiences or situations that can have an influence on these feelings and thus, on wellbeing. Cattell *et al* (2008) suggest that networks providing social support, various kinds of leisure activities and community participation are capable of exerting positive influences on wellbeing. In particular, leisure and community activities based around conservation and gardening is well practiced in Britain.

One of the more well-known examples is the Green Gym initiative by The Conservation Volunteers. Established in 1998, there are currently around thirty-eight Green Gyms throughout Britain, all with the aim of improving the health of participants as well as their local environment (TCV 2014a). Typical activities include planting flowers or trees and removing invasive species. They are located in both urban and rural areas and may be run in conjunction with regional council environmental improvement agendas (TCV 2014b). An evaluation of Green Gyms carried out in 2008 established that participants who joined the group with pre-existing physical and/or mental health difficulties ‘demonstrated’ the greatest improvement in terms of their overall wellbeing, primarily because they had the most to gain from participation in such activities (Yerrell 2008). In a report by the mental health organisation ‘Mind’, similar activities like gardening and growing food are also championed for their capacity to improve mental wellbeing (Mind 2013). Defined by Mind as ‘ecotherapy’, and anchored within understandings of nature ‘occupations’ as healthy activities, this type of environmental intervention aims to help people look after their own mental health as well as providing support to individuals recovering from existing problems. Though such agendas may provide demonstrable evidence of improvements to participants’ mental health as well as overall wellbeing, their existence may also be a little disconcerting. These programmes for improvement of wellbeing identify a shift from state support and intervention to that of individual-led management of health issues. Hall (2010) recognises that recent health policies are underpinned by a powerful discourse promoting individual responsibility and self-governance of the body. Within this framework, poor health and wellbeing indicate a lack of control over behavioural actions and therefore a failure to self-govern one’s body (Hall 2010).

To focus on experiences and practices which have the capacity to improve feelings of wellbeing, recent research by Andrews *et al* (2014) suggests the non-representational idea of affect can be used as a framework to further consider how people are influenced by environments and interactions. It is proposed that “wellbeing arises initially as an energy and intensity” (2014: 211) which through the interaction of human bodies and non-human

matter, is experienced by the individual as a particular state of feeling. Though it is the case that a precise definition of affect, like wellbeing, is difficult to pin down, Lorimer offers up an understanding of affect that is “distributed between, and can happen outside, bodies which are not exclusively human and might incorporate technologies, things, non-human living matter” (2008a: 552). In acknowledging the capacities for human and non-human affects, Andrews *et al* go on to outline how the idea of affect might specifically help geographers rethink wellbeing in terms of something “that arises *as* environment (rather than something that results, or is consciously taken *from* environment)” (2014: 211). In taking the relationship between affect and wellbeing forward, this section outlines the roles of both place and practice in the creation of landscapes which have the capacity to influence feelings of wellbeing. The first section focuses on the components of place, which, in a variety of ways, can be considered therapeutic. In using Gesler’s (1992) concept of therapeutic landscapes, I argue that it is not possible to regard places as inherently therapeutic. Rather it is suggested that therapeutic feeling arises from complex relations between the individual and wider social, cultural and environmental contexts. The final part of the chapter looks at examples of landscape practice, such as gardening or outdoor craftwork, which in the words of Andrews *et al* (2014: 211), allows the concept of therapy and wellbeing to be considered as something which “arises as environment”.

Therapeutic Landscapes?

The health benefits associated with certain places, such as outdoor green-space, are well known to us and rehearsed in everyday vernacular: ‘getting some fresh air’, ‘clearing one’s head’, ‘soaking up some vitamin D’. These phrases reflect, in colloquial terms, how we consider the outdoors to have positive effects on both our physical and mental wellbeing. Gesler (1992) notes how the healing power of landscapes can be traced to Greek and Roman times. Water, in the form of mineral springs or rivers symbolised purification and absolution and was thought to possess curative and restoration powers. In the 19th century, spas centred on mineral springs were sought by more affluent members of society in order to improve physical, psychological and social wellbeing (Gesler 1992). Though forms of these landscapes still exist today, places considered to be therapeutic are commonly found in more everyday environments. A city park, rural location or a small back garden are examples of everyday places people visit to improve their mental and physical wellbeing. Maller *et al* (2002) (in Kingsley and Townsend 2006) believe that humans are innately attracted to places in the natural world. While the exact definition of ‘natural’ varies according to the individual, it is suggested that a common component of the term will in some way refer to non-human activity. According to Parr (2007), these non-human

environments might then be perceived as a living entity exerting an active force upon our sense of wellbeing. It is this entity, and its components, which require greater unpacking and evaluation to determine how and why certain outdoor spaces are perceived as therapeutic.

The concept of therapeutic landscapes was first developed by geographer Will Gesler in 1992. Gesler explored how places such as mountain retreats or mineral springs are considered to possess restorative powers and are therefore perceived as therapeutic. He notes that simple description of these landscapes tells us very little about their therapeutic components and instead, draws attention to the interaction between environmental, individual and societal factors that work to promote healing. In exploring the interaction between such factors in relation to place, Gesler employs a broad understanding of the 'new' (at the time) cultural geographies of landscape. Recognising that landscapes can be usefully characterised in various ways, Gesler focuses on those places which are associated with physical or mental treatment and healing, subsequently identifying them as therapeutic landscapes.

The idea of a particular place having restorative or healing properties is not new, however. In the 18th and 19th centuries, mental health problems were thought to be the cause of a lack of contact with nature, largely due to increasingly industrial and urbanised lifestyles (Parr 2007). In an attempt to combat such mental health issues, ordered, domesticated, rural spaces were favoured over wild, untamed forms of nature (Parr 2007). In creating such places it was hoped that their "pleasant order" would promote "calm, rational reflection" and encourage patients to "give up their unnatural madness" (Parr 2007: 540). Mental health institutions were subsequently removed to tranquil rural sites where, in social, physical and mental terms, it was seen as a healthy environment (Parr 2007). Although there are social concerns associated with removing those suffering from mental ill health to the countryside (Philo 1987), the idea of spatial displacement from the urban to the rural in search of rest, recuperation and a healthier state of mind is still powerful today. Country getaways, luxury spa breaks and yoga holidays are all examples of removing oneself from a high-pressured lifestyle and visiting a place of retreat (Lea 2008). A place is considered to be a healthy retreat when it is either metaphorically or physically distant from the potential chaotic, dull or repetitive rhythms that may make everyday life stressful or uninspiring.

Such landscapes whether real or imagined, are not *intrinsically* therapeutic. Gesler (1992) and Conradson (2005) recognise that experience or perception of place is dependent upon a

complex set of factors including cultural, social, environmental and individual contexts. Indeed, mere physical presence within a landscape does not equate to a therapeutic experience. People interpret places in different ways; a place which one person finds to be energising or relaxing may be uncomfortable or irritating to another. Therefore, despite traditional perceptions noted above, places of retreat are not always associated with rural landscapes. They may be urban sites, either with a 'natural' dimension (such as a city park) or without. More specifically, therapeutic landscapes can encompass natural and built physical landscapes and are contingent upon a milieu of social and symbolic meanings associated with person and place. Such an observation is relevant to this research as walling crafts take place in both rural and urbanised landscapes. It is therefore important to be aware of the degree to which therapeutic experience is contingent upon not only the activity, but the social, cultural and environmental factors associated with a particular landscape.

In considering the complex set of factors influencing the therapeutic experience of place, Conradson (2005) draws attention to the relational affects operating between landscape, mind and body. It is suggested that therapeutic feelings "emerge through a complex set of transactions between a person and their broader socio-environmental setting" (2005: 338). In other words, places and our perceptions or experience of them are made through our own unique set of subjectivities, enmeshed within broader social and cultural narratives. Conradson's relational approach draws upon psychotherapeutic understandings of self "not as an autonomous, tightly bounded entity but rather as something that emerges within and through its relations to other people and events" (2005: 340). His vision also suggests that humans are able to "fold particular events into their selves" (2005: 340), so that even brief relational encounters may have resonance and meaning beyond the immediate. A study by Milligan and Bingley (2007) exemplifies this point, suggesting that some young people consider woodlands to be places of safety and relaxation and others perceive them as threatening and disconcerting. It was observed that young people who were permitted to explore and play in the woodlands in a largely unsupervised way during childhood were more likely to perceive the woods as restorative and soothing. Conversely individuals who were not permitted such childhood freedom regarded the woods with anxiety and apprehension. The findings suggest that life experiences and events make nature relations contingent in terms of their therapeutic qualities. In this respect, Conradson (2005) provides a helpful distinction of the analytical terms associated with therapeutic places. He suggests that by using the term 'therapeutic landscape experience' more emphasis is placed upon forms of self-landscape encounter, rather than just the physical features of the

landscape itself. In developing this approach, the next section in this chapter focuses upon embodied, place-based practices that can play an important role in therapeutic landscape experience.

Practice and Therapeutic Landscape Experience

In an earlier section of this chapter I situated dry-stone walling as a form of landscape practice, associated with theories of dwelling, embodiment and materiality. In this section, the concept of landscape practice is expanded to incorporate the idea that activities such as walling and gardening might have positive impacts on the mental and physical wellbeing of practitioners. Though these effects will be felt most intensely by those who choose to pursue outdoor activities like gardening or walling as a hobby, in the final section of the chapter I note how it is also relevant to professional or serious amateur practitioners through the concept of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 2002; Robinson 2010).

In a similar vein to the arguments of Gesler (1992) and Conradson (2005), Ingold's (2000) theory of the taskscape asserts that meaning and emotion are developed through engagement with landscape practices. As explained earlier in the chapter, the taskscape comprises a network of practices constitutive of the act of dwelling (Ingold 2000). It is through embodied tasks that Ingold believes the histories and lifecycles of humans, plants and animals are incorporated into landscapes. As a result, for humans, landscape "becomes a part of us, just as we are a part of it" (Ingold 2000: 191). This approach reiterates how individuals interact with and respond to their surroundings in different ways and how labelling a place as simply 'therapeutic' is insufficient and inaccurate. It also suggests that activities, or tasks, contribute to a person's emotional attachment to a particular place.

In recent years, academic interest in gardens has largely focussed on practice and creation as opposed to their attractiveness as artefacts (Crouch 2009a). Fuelled by the emergence of non-representational theories and the significance of practice and performance, new geographies of the garden produce unique grounds for interpreting space and culture (Crouch 2009a). Using theories of the taskscape (Ingold 2000), it is possible to appreciate the ways in which gardening has become regarded as a therapeutic practice. Health benefits associated with gardening have tended to focus on the physical impacts, but Milligan *et al* (2004) note how the sense of achievement and satisfaction involved in plant cultivation are also capable of providing emotional and spiritual renewal. Crouch (2009a) suggests that working alongside plants can bestow an ethic of relational care, which in turn assists in the development of responsibility and care for other humans.

Within this context, it is important to note the difference between practices which may be experienced as therapeutic (with which this thesis is primarily concerned) and particular examples of ‘therapy’. Horticultural therapy is defined as a treatment based technique that uses plant-work to reach clinical goals, while therapeutic horticulture refers to the positive impacts to wellbeing that may arise from gardening practices (Parr 2007). The latter is exemplified in Parr’s (2007) study of British historical asylum systems in which it is noted that relational interaction with the natural environment played an important role in the healing process of patients with mental health issues. Agricultural and horticultural activities undertaken by patients were used to ‘domesticate’ rural surroundings, but also in terms of being employed in a productive practice, acted as a means of mindless diversion and distraction (Parr 2007). As well as engaging in a practice, the more intangible, embodied associations of “living by the seasons and the demands of the land” (Parr 2007: 541), or simply observing nature, are important for releasing tension and promoting a calm state of mind. In contemporary research which investigated therapeutic taskscapes at a North American camp for troubled young people, Dunkley (2009) remarks on how the environmental situations (for example, thunderstorms) and charms of camp-living were not shied away from, but incorporated into everyday life and learning for the young people by way of a “push and pull dynamic between human intentions and nonhuman forces” (2009: 93). As such, therapeutic activities which aim to work with the rhythms of the land and weather are still very much part of contemporary approaches to mental health and wellbeing, notably within community gardens and allotments.

Based upon the benefits derived from strong social networks, work by Milligan *et al* (2004) and Kingsley and Townsend (2006), suggest that community gardens are places where residents have the opportunity to communicate, socialise and gain support from others. It is suggested that as a result of this community, residents feel more empowered and able to respond to opportunities for developing social capital. However, in a study of allotments, Parr (2007) argues that that in some locations, some of the gardening participants did not know each other, and consequently social interaction was not conducive to feelings of wellbeing. Indeed, gardening can also be considered a relatively solitary activity and thus may not bring together the most socially interested or motivated people. Furthermore though community garden activities are in-line with current British state agendas to improve social networks of people traditionally marginalised from mainstream society, Parr (2007) goes on to note that such outcomes should be assessed carefully and critically. In a study of urban garden schemes in England and Scotland, Parr observed that positive therapeutic outcomes are contingent upon a variety of factors, but

not limited to; weather conditions, garden location and variations in an individuals' physical or mental energy or enthusiasm. It is therefore essential that evaluation of such activities take account of wider social and cultural contexts. With this in mind, careful consideration of activities known to generate therapeutic feelings should not be limited to gardening or horticultural projects. Like the examples of gardening illustrated here, dry-stone walling is a comparable activity, associated with creativity and community work. It is therefore suggested that alongside sensitive acknowledgement of specific factors contributing to individual and social wellbeing, there is potential for walling to be regarded as a practice capable of prompting perceptions of therapeutic experience.

Outdoor activities like dry-stone walling and gardening can also be considered from a phenomenological perspective. Walling is an activity that involves extensive work with earthy materiality, providing participants with an appreciative embodied understanding of the land and how it may change and develop. Research on environmental volunteering (Smith *et al* 2010) outlines how some participants rejected gloves and preferred to have bare hands for tree planting. Work of this type therefore becomes “embodied and multi-sensual” (2010: 268) and although it might simply be a result of gloves making movements a little clumsier, for some people it also reflects a desire for deeper engagement with the textures of the earth, as well as providing a sense of “instant gratification” (2010: 269). Milligan and Bingley (2007) suggest that the satisfaction gained from interaction with the soil and getting one's hands dirty were linked to memories of childhood play. This perspective also acts as a reminder of how memory is intimately linked to experience and it is through the experience of particular activities, including childhood games that we make meaningful relations with place (Ingold 2000). Multi-sensual engagement with the environment further illustrates the complex networks that work together to produce a therapeutic task or landscape. Particularly in gardens, the range of colours, smells, the beauty of flowers and birdsong have a significant impact upon how one feels in that place (Milligan *et al* 2004). It demonstrates how multi-sensual embodied interaction with the land includes a degree of emotional investment that can vary greatly between individuals. In terms of producing attractive and healthy gardens, it has been suggested that an emotional commitment to the task is important for successful results (Milligan *et al* 2004). This commitment reflects a level of care, expressed over time that rewards the gardener with plant growth and vitality. In terms of therapeutic potential, the temporality of gardening provides focus, continuity and encouragement for individuals who may lack direction or confidence.

Stone-Work as Place-Based Practice

With regards to other kinds of place-based practices, sociologist Richard Sennett (2008) is concerned with exploring the ‘material consciousness’ that is experienced during a variety of arts and craftwork. He describes his quarry as the continual dialogue between craftsperson and their chosen material. It is situated around the concept that dialogue exists as a result of understanding *and* doing, and where observation and material engagement are not detached from each other. The outcomes of such a practice may provide a predictable sense of achievement and pride in the work, but the focus here is on the expressions and feelings produced by the activity itself. Crouch (2009b) suggests that creativity emerges through the experience and practice of doing and may be found in various mundane, everyday spaces and activities such as gardening. In this way, creative engagement becomes figured as a slower kind of interaction that does not instil expectation or push the individual, but allows insight and curiosity to unfold in tentative and uncertain ways (Crouch 2009b). Creativity represents an emotional and temporal investment in the process of doing and once rhythm and concentration are established, it is no surprise that such unassuming activities are capable of providing an “emotional payoff” (Sennett 2008: 175) both during and following completion of the work. Art and craftwork may also be thought of as a series of repetitious bodily movements that, when entwined with a focussed mind, can be understood as a phenomenological approach to making sense of things and places.

Writer and artist Alyson Hallett exemplifies making sense of things and place through an artistic engagement with earthly materials. Her doctoral thesis focussed on geographical intimacy and was based upon her belief that:

“Our health (that of the planets and our own) depends upon being able to meet, accept and respect our environments as places that are inseparable from us and we from them. Living, in this sense, becomes a process of continual exchange. Instead of seeing an earth that is lived upon by human beings and animals, we begin to know life itself as something that we make together” (Hallett 2012: n.p.n.)

Following completion of her PhD, Hallett employed her body as a tool of investigation and imagination and, as a result of a spontaneous hill walking adventure, became intrigued by glacial erratics and their journeying through landscapes. She became fascinated with not only the movement of the erratic, but also of the stones and pebbles that we collect from

beaches and carry around as mementos, or those that we place atop graves in memory of loved ones. In order to make sense of these things and places, Hallett developed a project called *The Migrating Habits of Stones*, which saw individual stones carved with the words: ‘*And stones moved silently across the world*’ (see Figure 2-1). Three of these stones have been placed around the world: one in Bristol, another in a retreat centre in the USA and the third at Kanahooka Point in Australia (Hallett 2012).



Figure 2-1: A Migrating Stone (Photo used with permission of Alyson Hallett © 2012)

This type of creative engagement with stone also speaks of the history and legacy associated with natural objects and how through art and craft we can both communicate and develop a new history for the material. Artwork of this type is a way of making a permanent or semi-permanent mark in the environment that for the artist may represent a stoic sense of achievement. Sennett (2008) describes this as the part of human nature that wishes to do something well, feel proud, and say ‘I exist; I made this.’ As enduring features made of stone and the skilled hands of a practitioner, dry-stone walls can be similarly thought of as crafted landscape legacies. As noted in Chapter 2, walls are historical records of changing agricultural practice and political enclosure as well as representations of underlying geology and corresponding construction technique. Though more frequently built as aesthetically pleasing structures than functional agricultural tools, contemporary walls also leave their own legacies. As Hallett notes, our own health (and that of the Earth) is founded on respect for the environment as places that are inseparable

from us and us from them. Thus, in the construction of a dry-stone wall, the presence and intention of the creator is wrapped within its legacy. Reiterating the powerful sense of achievement as outlined by Sennett (2008), the physical and emotional act of creating such a feature within the landscape has the potential to be extremely empowering. Bertram (2013) also recognises that making and crafting can be socially empowering, a concept which will be explored in relation to a community dry-stone walling project in Chapter 7.

As well having the potential for personal and social empowerment, Crouch (2009b) reflects upon creative engagement as a means of making space for the unexpected and different experiences found within the material and metaphorical world. He speaks of being attuned to the more-than-human and different rhythms of life easily overlooked in the moments of chaos, stress or boredom that can be frequent components of everyday life. Similarly, Hawkins (2014) notes that creative encounters allow for new forms of experience, asking questions of the creator and encouraging he or she to think about the world differently. Sustained or frequent participation in craft and creative practice may therefore act as a positive influence on the way in which one engages with the world. For Crouch (2009b), creative engagement is not just a single moment in time, but can also be regarded as ongoing throughout life, formulating a healthy balance between body, mind and experience.

Such a balance is also reflected in the concept of ‘flow’. In his influential study, *Flow: The classic work on how to achieve happiness* (2002), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes flow as an intense form of concentration that means people often lose track of time or forget about other tasks. During phases of flow, mind and body are equally engaged in what Csikszentmihalyi calls “optimal experience” (2002: 3). Upon reaching optimal experience, the individual is in full control of his or her actions and consequently feels a deep sense of exhilaration and enjoyment. Physical movement becomes fluent and time appears to pass quickly. In order to reach the realm of flow, it is necessary to meet a skill level achievable by the maker and find a balance between boredom and anxiety. The idea of ‘being in one’s element’ is also extremely similar to the concept of flow. Robinson explains that when people are in their element “they connect with something fundamental to their sense of identity, purpose and well-being” (2010: 21). As a result there is great potential for pleasure and happiness when people are appropriately engaged – both physically and mentally – in a creative task. Though Csikszentmihalyi pays most attention to extremely high levels of creative genius, Gauntlett (2011) points out that attainment of flow is also possible within various everyday forms of creativity, such as fixing the car, creating a website or sewing. Being in one’s element or achieving flow is therefore

attainable by people engaged in an activity as either a professional or hobbyist. In Chapter 6, I explore references to flow as described by several professional wallers. Though there are also instances of flow noted in the experiences of hobbyist wallers (see Chapter 7), they are less frequent than those associated with professionals. It is appropriate to assume that in being less skilled, the balance between technique, boredom and anxiety as described by Csikszentmihalyi is more difficult to achieve for hobbyists than for professionals.

This section began with an introduction to the concept of wellbeing. It outlined how wellbeing is useful within a geographical context as it provides a non-medical approach to health that respects the social and spatial relations which shape life experiences (Hall 2010). In proceeding with this acknowledgement, the role of place and place-based practices in providing people with positive and therapeutic experiences were reviewed. It was noted that feelings of wellbeing were contingent upon an individual's unique set of subjectivities, existing alongside social, cultural and environmental contexts. More explicitly, it was suggested by Andrews *et al* (2014) that feelings of wellbeing arose in the affective interactions associated with being in, and participative of landscape. Gardening activities were used to illustrate how dry-stone walling might also be regarded as a therapeutic landscape practice engaging people in an outdoor setting, but also allows for experience of creativity and flow.

Conclusions

This chapter has drawn on interdisciplinary literatures to provide a conceptual framework from which a deeper appreciation of the multiple geographies of walling can be explored. It has addressed the various historical geographies of walls in England and Scotland and discussed their role in the politics of Parliamentary land enclosure. During the enclosure period of the 17th and 18th centuries, many individuals saw walls as symbols of exclusion and dispossession and thus sought to 'level' them to the ground. It was suggested that this symbolism has since been neglected in contemporary narratives of the dry-stone wall (Naylor 2011). It has also been noted how walls built in response to the economic and political agendas of the 17th and 18th centuries, are in less obvious ways, embedded with the social, economic and political geographies of enclosure.

An engagement with phenomenological approaches to landscape allows for an understanding of walling practice from embodied, emotional and material perspectives. Ingold's theory on dwelling usefully configures walling as a practice within the wider ensemble of activities through which people weave the rich tapestry of a lived landscape. Figured thus, it is possible to approach historical and contemporary examples of dry-stone

walls as landscape legacies, where social, cultural, embodied and material interactions can be traced. Such embodied, emotional and material themes continue into discussions of health and wellbeing examined in the latter part of the chapter. I note that embodied and emotional engagement with certain places and practices has the potential to improve an individuals' physical and mental wellbeing. Therapeutic influence afforded by place, however, was identified as being dependent upon a complex network of social, cultural and environmental subjectivities. It was therefore suggested that place-based practices such as gardening and dry-stone walling allow for the development of embodied and emotional meaning, through which feelings of wellbeing, contingent upon social, cultural and environmental contexts are derived. The therapeutic and creative dimensions of crafts and place-based practices provide a narrative within which to subsequently appreciate the experiences of professional, amateur and hobbyist wallers. This chapter has therefore succeeded in creating a firm theoretical framework from which the construction of a lively geography (or geographies) of walling can proceed.

Chapter 3 : Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the qualitative methodological approach used to better understand dry-stone walling culture and practice in Britain. I employ a broad ethnographic and practice-led strategy based on the use of various methods to create a coherent, comprehensive and embodied appreciation of the walling craft. Methods include periods of observant participation of various walling events, such as instructional courses, demonstrations and competitions; twenty-six in-depth interviews with serious amateur and professional wallers; and extensive documentary analysis of textual walling material dating from the early 20th century. In addition, during periods of observant participation, I conducted semi-structured interviews and group interviews with novice wallers as well as engaging directly with the practice of walling itself.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a thorough account of each methodological component, including design, implementation, recording and analysis, as well as illustrating how the ethnographic approach appropriately meets with the aims of the thesis. In the first instance, the theoretical context and justification for adopting a practice-based approach to walling crafts are outlined. I provide my reasoning for using a suite of methods to address the complexities of British walling culture. As the chapter proceeds, each method is presented in turn, detailing the techniques for data collection, recording and analysis. In addition I provide a commentary on field-drawings and sketches, which feature as a supplement to, and extension of, text throughout the thesis. As the chapter draws to a close, I address some of the methodological challenges encountered in relation to each method. Such challenges also relate to a broader discussion of researcher positionality and the tricky negotiations associated with being an observant participant.

Methodological Design

Theoretical Basis

From the very beginning stages of PhD proposal design, it was intended that this research project would use a broadly ethnographic and practice-led approach to uncover the various geographies of contemporary dry-stone walling culture. As outlined in Chapter 3, a more-than-representational and phenomenological approach to landscape practice and performance requires that direct engagement with walling is essential for providing an embodied, emotional and multi-sensual appreciation of the activity. This practice-led

approach furnished me with a depth of appreciation of walling impossible to acquire through observational and textual inquiry alone. My embodied and emotional experiences of walling acted as a foundation from which I could bring together all other elements of walling culture and heritage. My own joyous, laborious or frustrating experiences of walling in all possible weather conditions afforded me opportunity to relate physically and emotionally, to historical and contemporary accounts of walling. Without such an embodied approach, a cultural study of walling risks being dispassionate in tone and lacking in temporal and multi-sensual textures which are the essence of the craft.

In recent years, practise-based (Wylie 2006), performative (Nash 2000; Richardson-Ngwenga 2014), non-representational (Thrift 2000a; Lorimer 2005) and affect-based (Conradson 2005) approaches to research have been well prescribed and documented by scholars within human geography.⁸ These approaches aim to challenge the traditional premise of cultural geography based upon the extraction of meaning and interpretation of value from a range of representational forms (Thrift 1999; Lorimer 2005). In the words of Nigel Thrift, the key thinker with whom non-representational theory originates:

“It is an approach to understanding the world in terms of *effectivity* rather than representation; not the *what* but the *how*” (Thrift 2000a: 216)

Crang (2003) enlarges on this statement by noting that methodologies based upon non-representation and performance question what is *done* and not what is represented. As a result, research of this kind opens up new ways for academics to consider how knowledge is acquired and shared. Crang suggests that it is possible to develop “haptic knowledges” (2003: 499), where the process of learning through our bodies is taken seriously and counted as valid knowledge. Similarly, Nash (2000) considers the rethinking of the body in terms of practice and performance as an important and influential development within cultural geography. Referring to Thrift’s argument, Nash goes on to clarify that non-representational theory focuses on the “body-subject, not the body, engaged in joint body-*practices* of becoming” (Thrift 1997: 142 in Nash 2000: 655, original emphasis). In other words, the focus is on those practices through which we become embodied, relational and expressive subjects involved with others and objects in a world continually in process (Nash 2000). Such practices may be everyday activities, experienced by ordinary people.

⁸ In Chapter 2 of this thesis, the theory of non-representation, further clarified as more-than-representation (Lorimer 2005), was introduced as a philosophical and conceptual basis for the project. In this chapter however, focus lies upon the methodological implications associated with taking a more-than-representational and practice-led approach to doing research.

Indeed, Lorimer suggests that life takes shape and gains expression through various ordinary and unremarkable activities, including:

“Shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions” (2005: 84)

Therefore, if life is made lively through such affective, embodied and emotional encounters, it becomes the responsibility of the researcher to conceive of her body as a conduit through which these dispositions come alive. According to Crang (2005), if these activities are to be taken seriously, the scholar must move beyond thinking of the body as a topic, and instead aim to do research *through* it. In his 2012 paper, Lorimer attempts just this by reflecting on his own embodied and emotional knowledge as a lifelong long-distance runner. He figures his feet and legs as sensory devices through which surfaces and slopes are explored and known:

“I consider the long-distance runner as a highly accomplished sensualist, as someone who comes to know the variety of the world according to the feeling of differently textured terrains – bare rock, sand, soil, concrete – and the kinds of ecology that grow through them. Since, by my reckoning, an appreciation of what is underfoot – as much as what is overhead – alters runners’ moods.” (2012: 83)

Accordingly, the practice of running, and thus the performance of research, becomes one based on different kinds of knowing, shifting from comprehension to apprehension and evidenced through embodiment or emotionality (Davies and Dwyer 2007). For Lorimer, the act of running is more sensed than scenic. Embodied practice and the appreciation of knowledge through sensory engagement is elsewhere evident in Ingold’s analysis of movement and skill. Reflecting on the ordinary task of sawing a piece of wood, Ingold explains how the movement of the hand is guided by the “remembered traces of past performance” (2011: 57). Skill is thus located with the body-*and*-mind, developed through the practice of activity. In terms of developing craft-knowledge, it seems therefore essential that the researcher is committed to engaging in the practice of their chosen craft. Drawing upon his background as an artist and sculptor, geographer David Paton (2013) effectively dovetails experience as an apprentice sawman and mason at a Cornish quarry with reflections on materiality and place-making. His practice-led approach to quarry work was the principal means by which he was able to understand granite as physical matter and bear witness to the complex ways in which stone works within his working world. In so doing, Paton enlists a version of embodied learning where in addition to the

use of hammer and chisel, he considers his body as a tool, involved in “choreographed formulations of a stone-metal-flesh dialogue” (2013: 1074).

Taking inspiration from Paton (2013), Lorimer (2012) and Cragg (2005), my methodological approach also seeks to do research through the body. By engaging with dry-stone wall building myself, I was able to develop emotional and physical contexts around the movements and techniques about which I was reading. In commencing interviews with professional and amateur wallers, it also became evident that first-hand experience of walling was essential in comprehending their involvement in the craft. Some of the terms and phrases attributed to walling practice are embodied in nature (‘getting a hand/eye/back into the wall’, ‘developing an eye for stone’) and thus required a level of familiarity with the activity to act as a reference point. My methodological approach is therefore considered a practice-led, ethnographic form of inquiry. As noted by Cloke *et al*, ethnographic research can involve a “shamelessly eclectic and methodologically opportunist” (2004: 169) combination of methods, but at its core, must incorporate an extended period of participatory observation. As the subsequent sections will demonstrate, though my own methodological approach may be considered ‘eclectic’ and ‘opportunist’, methods used were in part informed by the diverse nature of British walling culture. That said, and in following Cloke *et al* (2004), it is important to note that participatory engagement with walling lies at the centre of the research methodology and provided the other research methods with substance and depth.

Fieldwork Structure

As it exists in Britain today, the dry-stone walling craft is based upon professional, amateur, hobbyist and voluntary participation. In order to develop a thorough understanding of walling culture, it was inadvisable to consider any of these elements in isolation. In constructing an all-round impression of contemporary walling, it was therefore important that attention be paid to each kind of involvement within contemporary walling culture. To achieve this deeper understanding of walling culture, it was essential that I was creative in my use and execution of research methods. For example, during periods of observant participation, I engaged in informal conversation with hobbyist and volunteer wallers, thus establishing an appreciation for their involvement in the craft. Additionally I also conducted in-depth interviews with professional and serious amateur practitioners, discussing their experience of the craft in relation to employment or community building projects.

Similarly, as a rural craft with a rich heritage dating back to the 16th century, I judged it unwise to focus solely on contemporary understandings of the craft. To do so would have been to disregard the origins of the techniques and traditions that remain embedded within walling practice nowadays. It was therefore essential that an assessment of walling practice take seriously the history of the craft, as well as appreciate the experiences of those first practitioners and the builders of such foundational landscape features. To this end, I sought out documentary material to provide accounts of historical walling in Britain. Both primary and secondary sources were collated, with the majority relating to walling activities taking place during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Identification and collection was ongoing throughout fieldwork activity, with some materials located through directed searches of online and physical archives, and others from contacts established during the project.

In addition to gaining access to useful documentary sources, networking between members of the dry-stone walling community was extremely important in developing opportunities for interview and participatory events. At the outset of the project, contact was established with key individuals at The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) where a Heritage Lottery funded community dry-stone walling project was already underway in Aberdeenshire. This project acted as the core element within my participatory engagement with walling. I attended my first session in April 2012 and continued to do so at regular intervals until November 2013. Links with this Aberdeenshire project also had an influence upon the geographical scope of the research. In terms of geology and construction techniques, walling is an activity where cultural diversity reflects distinctive regional geographies.⁹ It is therefore tempting to cast a broad net, both nationally and internationally, to uncover the differences and commonalities within walling culture. Whilst there is merit in approaching walling in such a way, the aims of my project required a more in-depth examination. Consequently, my focus fell on wallers and walling activities based in Scotland. This approach also served a practical purpose, allowing for travel between various events and meetings. However in the process of doing fieldwork, it became clear that dry-stone dyking in Scotland had strong links with people, organisations and activities located in England, Wales and overseas. To ignore these connections for the sake of ‘geographical tidiness’ would have provided an inaccurate and incomplete account of walling craft and culture. As a result, on occasion it was necessary for me to extend activity beyond Scotland’s borders to appreciate some of the geographical networks existing within and around walling history and contemporary culture.

⁹ For more information see Chapter 4: ‘Dry-stone Wall Construction: Fundamentals and Variation’ (p, 111).

Though this section has outlined how the various elements of walling culture are co-dependent and interlinked, in order to provide a clear articulation of the methods used, the following section takes each technique in turn, explaining the processes of implementation and analysis. In practice however, these methods blended together in fieldnotes and other collected material. As Cloke *et al* (2004) note, the blurring of data recording and interpretation helps inform future fieldwork strategies. I therefore invite the reader to bear in mind this ‘blurring effect’ while examining the subsequent details on method implementation. Furthermore, it should be noted that in adopting an ethnographic approach, I anticipated and welcomed the blurring between methods, sure in the belief that a more coherent understanding of walling culture and practice would be produced.

Observant Participation

As noted above, my periods of observant, practice-based participation formed the methodological core of this project. These sessions were ongoing throughout the fieldwork phase, commencing in April 2012 and concluding in November 2013. The majority of the sessions were based around a Heritage Lottery funded project, organised by the Aberdeenshire branch of the British conservation group, The Conservation Volunteers¹⁰ (henceforth TCV). Known as the Community Dry-Stone Walling Project, its aim was to provide several different community groups with professional-led training in dry-stone wall building. Throughout the entirety of the project, seven groups were educated in dry-stone walling techniques. Alongside three of these groups I participated in walling work and conducted semi-structured conversational interviews with group participants. Whilst the TCV project will be described in detail below, it must also be noted that in addition I was alert to other opportunities for observant participation out with those associated with TCV. These included sessions with the West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association, the South-West Scotland branch of the DSWA, walling competitions and meeting with a professional waller at work. These ‘extra-curricular’ periods of observant participation allowed insights into other examples of hobbyist, amateur and professional walling practices in a way that was complementary to my overall understanding of the craft as it is experienced in Scotland and parts of England. These sessions also assisted in the development of my own practical walling skills, allowing me to engage with different professionals and practitioners and in terms of walling competitions, observe the craft being practiced at an extremely high level.

¹⁰ Originally known as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), the organisation became known as The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) in May 2012.

For clarity, the following sections will outline the TCV project and additional observant participation sessions separately. However with regards to fieldwork method, execution and data analysis, all observant participation sessions were conducted in a similar way. I will detail the organisational specifics of the various sessions, introduce my methods for data recording and identify any associated challenges or limitations.

TCV Project

The main aim of the TCV project was to establish community-led dry-stone walling groups in which individuals taught the traditional skills of dry-stone walling are able to restore derelict walls in parts of Aberdeenshire. This core objective sits alongside the broader aims of the TCV organisation including: a drive to improve Scotland's historic environment through the repair of dry-stone walls; investment in environmentally active citizens; an aim to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the project participants; and finally, support individuals in developing new skills which may lead to sustained employment.

At the commencement of my PhD in 2011, contact had already been established with key persons involved in the TCV walling project, namely Catrin Hughes, Programmes Manager for TCV Scotland and Yvonne Stephan, Volunteer Development Officer of the Aberdeen branch of TCV. Funding from the Heritage Lottery had been granted in 2010 with the search for appropriate community groups commencing shortly after. As a result, the project was already underway when I established contact in 2011. This did not prove to be an issue however, as owing to a number of reasons TCV sought permission from Heritage Lottery Fund to extend the project beyond its original completion date of March 2012. This extension allowed the project to continue until June 2013.¹¹ During the early planning stages of my PhD, I maintained regular email correspondence with Yvonne Stephan, primary coordinator of the walling project. This allowed us to establish mutual expectations for my project and for me to keep abreast of developments regarding TCV walling events.

In March 2012, ethical approval as outlined by ESRC guidelines was granted by the University of Glasgow ethics board. As all research was to be overt and written consent sought from TCV project participants, approval was swift and straightforward. Additionally, a letter of support regarding my project aims and methodological approach was provided by Catrin Hughes on behalf of TCV and submitted with my application for

¹¹ Although the TCV project officially ended on this date, as a result of additional local funding, one of the groups coordinated by TCV (Huntly Mental Health group) were able to continue walling activities beyond this date.

ethical approval. In producing an information sheet and consent form for potential participants, it was important for me to ensure these were clear and easily understood. The purpose of the information sheet was to introduce myself and my research to the volunteers and subsequently invite them to participate in my project. In addition to assessing my own learning experience, in order to consider the role of voluntary and hobbyist wallers within the development of the craft, it was essential I was able to observe and question such individuals about their involvement. As is noted by Cloke *et al* (2004), observant participation:

“Uniquely involves studying both what people say they do and why, and what they are seen to do and say to others about this” (2004: 169).

The purpose of questioning participants was to draw on their experiences of the dry-stone craft, reasons for being involved in the activity and what they hoped to gain from it. Fontana and Frey (2000) suggest that when run in conjunction with observant participation, interviews are able to provide a greater depth of understanding than found in other methods, such as interviewing alone. It was intended that I would remain creative and flexible with regards to questioning, in the hope that the ‘interview’ would be regarded by me and the participant as a conversation open to interruption, agreement and discussion (Laurier 1999). The aim of this approach was to reduce the perceived distance between researcher and participant and ultimately allow the interview to become a collaborative engagement (Cloke *et al* 2004). In opposition to the traditional school of thought associated with extracting information from the interviewee, the intention was to engage participants and establish a rapport which drew out more subtle and nuanced accounts of their walling hopes and experiences (Valentine 2005; Fontana and Frey 2000). In addition to information regarding the basis of conversation, potential participants were also asked whether they would consent to appear in photographs and video clips and if they would allow their voice to be digitally recorded. Of the twenty-two volunteers involved throughout the duration of the TCV project, only one preferred not to be involved in the project. To preserve their anonymity, all participants acknowledged within this thesis have been given a pseudonym.

Once ethical approval had been granted I was able to conduct a pilot study. In April and May 2012, I conducted two pilot study sessions, each of which took place over two days (see Table 3-1). Both sessions held in April and May were run in conjunction with an Introductory dry-stone walling course, where I along with six or seven other volunteers were taught by a professional dry-stone waller. As these were the first TCV project

sessions of 2012, they were ideal opportunities for me to better understand how the TCV project was structured as well as introduce myself and my project to the volunteers and professional waller. Furthermore it was also my first experience of dry-stone walling and provided me with insight to the craft and allowed me to consider how I might approach embodied learning.

Name of TCV Group	Date	Location	No. Of Participants (excl. myself)	Type of Data Collected
Community Justice Team Aberdeenshire Council	18/04/2012	Balmacassie Community Woodland, Ellon	6	Fieldnotes
Community Justice Team Aberdeenshire Council	19/04/2012	Balmacassie Community Woodland, Ellon	6	Fieldnotes
SAC Students	26/05/2012	SAC, Craibstone Estate, Aberdeen	7	Fieldnotes; Photographs; Experimented with sound recording
SAC Students	27/05/2012	SAC, Craibstone Estate, Aberdeen	7	Fieldnotes; Photographs

Table 3-1: Pilot Study sessions conducted with TCV groups in April and May 2012.

During the pilot study sessions, I worked alongside two different groups of volunteers. The first, conducted in April 2012, comprised of six Community Justice Team members from Aberdeenshire Council. In order to extend the reach and sustainability of the project, TCV had also sought to include groups who were in a position to pass on their walling skills to other individuals. Falling within this category, the remit of the Community Justice Team is to work with offenders and ex-offenders on practical, outdoor projects. The TCV project therefore provided an ideal opportunity in which the Community Justice Team were able to develop dry-stone walling skills. However, as this was my first practice-based walling event and direct involvement with the TCV project, I directed most attention to becoming familiar with the project structure as well as my own embodied learning process. It also provided opportunity to introduce myself to the professional waller who provided instruction for all of the TCV groups with whom I was involved. Qualified to mastercraftsman level, our instructor had a wealth of experience in the design, construction and repair of a variety of dry-stone walls and features. He is in demand worldwide as an

instructor and has served as an examiner for the DSWA. Intrigued by my project, David¹² was keen to be involved and provided me with a wealth of information and context regarding British walling. As a result, the primary pilot study was an excellent opportunity in which to establish a level of trust with David, an important component in conducting ethnographic research (Kitchen and Tate 2000; Cloke *et al* 2004).

Once familiar with the practical aspects of both walling and TCV project structure, in the second pilot study session in May I became more aware of the interactions between group members. I came to realise that members often knew each other and so interacted in more relaxed and familiar ways than they perhaps would if they were strangers. As walling work was conducted in small groups of three to four, conversations often became group discussions. It therefore became important for me to recognise the interpersonal dynamics of the group (Cloke *et al* 2004) and be aware that although group members knew each other, not all worked well together and the occasional disagreements or mutterings were to be expected. It became clear to me that learning a craft as part of a group can be as much about learning to work with other people as it is learning and applying techniques.

Both pilot studies also gave me opportunity to consider how I would record information. This included thoughts and feelings about my own relational experiences of walling as well as recording conversation between me and participants. As I was involved in walling alongside other group members, I was aware that conversation, whether directed by me or not, was likely to develop. I therefore remained attuned to what people were saying at all times, regardless of whether I asked a particular question. This required a great deal of concentration and memory work on my part as it was not always possible to take notes following an interesting discussion. It has been noted by Cook (2005) that the act of note-taking is often controlled by the practicalities of the fieldwork situation and that subsequent recording of sayings and doings most likely occur in a non-linear fashion (Watson and Till 2010). I was also concerned that overt note-taking would risk distracting participants and lead to me drawing attention to myself as researcher (Cloke *et al* 2004) and therefore avoided writing substantial diary entries during practical sessions. As Cloke *et al* (2004) advise, during refreshment breaks I was able to write down a few sentences in a pocket notebook to act as a memory aid for when I was able to write more comprehensive details. In practice, this technique worked well and at the end of each day of walling, I was able to produce detailed accounts of the day's events. To allow me to incorporate field-sketches and diagrams, fieldnotes were recorded by hand and contained

¹² Throughout the thesis, all participants have been given a pseudonym.

within a notebook. Though this method worked well, in the second pilot study I experimented with recording conversations using a small sound recorder.¹³ My intention was to keep recording while we worked and hopefully pick up our conversation. I was unwilling to start and stop the voice recorder during significant conversation due to concerns that it would distract participants and act as a psychological barrier to their responses (Cloke *et al* 2004). Upon playback however, I realised I had unwittingly captured the soundscape of walling. Snippets of conversation, birdsong, incoherent voices of the adjacent group and the sound of stones being knocked together aurally described the fieldwork environment. Though difficult to pick out the conversation of participants, this foray into sound recording alerted me to the value and potential of exploring practice through other fieldwork methodologies (for examples see Matless 2005; Carlyle and Lane 2013 and Gallagher and Prior 2014).

In reflecting upon the pilot study sessions I was able to adapt and refine techniques employed during fieldwork. During this time I also became familiar with the professional walling instructor as well as the overall structure of the TCV project. In terms of developing my own walling skills, the initial two days of pilot study gave me scope to concentrate on my own engagement with the craft, without feeling immediate pressure to be a fully-functioning researcher. As a result, I felt more comfortable with the activity during the following two days of pilot study and was thus able to concentrate on engaging with participants and experimenting with fieldwork methods. In the time between completing pilot study and commencing participation with the final community group involved in the TCV project and in addition to refining my research techniques, I was able to pursue other methodological opportunities. Although these methods will be discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter, they included the collection and analysis of relevant archival and documentary sources, as well as organisation and recruitment of professional and amateur wallers for interview.

In November 2012, I commenced participation with Huntly Mental Health group (henceforth HMH), the final community group to be involved in the TCV project. Over the following twelve months, I was involved in eight individual walling sessions (see Table 3-2) as well as present at a community event organised by members of HMH in August 2013. In addition, I conducted three group interviews with members of HMH who had

¹³ As was noted in the consent forms, permission was sought and granted by all participants who were involved in the session. Additionally, prior to switching on the recorder, I once more asked each individual for their permission in using it.

participated in walling sessions. Participation with HMH concluded in November 2013 when I conducted a ‘wrap-up’ group interview.

TCV Group	Date	Session Type	Location	No. of Participants (excl. myself)	Data Collected
HMH	06/11/12	Instruction Session	East Cairnhill Farm, Aberdeenshire	7	Fieldnotes; photographs
HMH	07/11/12	Instruction Session	East Cairnhill Farm, Aberdeenshire	6	Fieldnotes; photographs
HMH	02/04/13	Practice Session	East Cairnhill Farm, Aberdeenshire	4	Fieldnotes; photographs
HMH	03/04/13	Practice Session	East Cairnhill Farm, Aberdeenshire	5	Fieldnotes; photographs
HMH	24/04/13	Instruction Session	Community Allotments, Huntly	3	Fieldnotes; photographs
HMH	25/04/13	Instruction Session	Community Allotments, Huntly	2	Fieldnotes; photographs; video
HMH	21/05/13	Practice Session	Community Allotments, Huntly	4	Fieldnotes; photographs
HMH	23/05/13	Practice Session	Community Allotments, Huntly	4	Fieldnotes; photographs; video

Table 3-2: Outline of Huntly Mental Health group practical walling sessions.

Huntly Mental Health group¹⁴ is a limited company based in Huntly; a small town located approximately forty miles north-west of Aberdeen. HMH provides support to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of individuals within Huntly and neighbouring areas. They organise a number of events including a monthly tea dance, regular meetings of a horticultural group known as the Huntly Community Growers, relaxation sessions and craft classes. In light of these events, the TCV dry-stone walling project was therefore a good fit within the HMH group remit. Although the number of participants varied slightly over the eight sessions, four individuals remained committed to the project throughout. As is noted in Table 3-2, the format of walling sessions included both instructor led and group practice meetings during which there is no instructor present. It was intended by TCV that

¹⁴ In late 2013, Huntly Mental Health was renamed Networks of Wellbeing (NoW). As this change took place after my final group interview, within this thesis the group will continue to be referred to as Huntly Mental Health.

practice sessions would allow participants time to develop and enhance their walling skills, without the presence of the instructor. In terms of practicalities for my own fieldwork, these practice sessions were an ideal opportunity in which to engage participants more openly in conversation. During instructor-led sessions, it was often difficult to direct the topic of conversation as it was necessary for our instructor to intervene with further direction, advice and comment. It was also during these practice sessions where I felt my relationship and familiarity with the participants begin to develop. As we often called on each other to for opinion, or to assist with the moving and positioning of large stones, teamwork featured extensively within practice sessions. I was also very quickly integrated into the group, with participants making me (and my research ambitions) feel welcome within their project. As was the case with our professional instructor, the building of trusting relationships with participants was essential in improving the research experience (Kitchen and Tate 2000).

The first four walling sessions with HMH were based on a farm approximately twelve miles outside of Huntly. The farm owner had given permission for the group to repair an old wall that had fallen into disrepair. It no longer served as a field boundary but as it was located close to the farmyard, the farmer was keen to see it improved. Over the first two days and assisted by our instructor, I worked with seven participants to complete a section of wall approximately three metres in length and eighty centimetres high (Figure 3-1).



Figure 3-1: Repair of farm wall near Insch, Aberdeenshire, with Huntly Mental Health group, November 2012. (Photo used with permission of George Gunn.)

As can be seen from Figure 3-1, the area surrounding the wall quickly became muddy and tricky to navigate. One side of the wall (the right hand side of the image) was bounded by trees, hedges and a fence, making movement alongside the wall rather awkward. On our return in April 2013, our task (without the assistance of David) was to extend the wall by approximately 1.5 metres (Figure 3-2). As shown in Table 3-2, in comparison to the previous session, numbers of participants had fallen slightly. Due to other commitments, or little interest in pursuing walling, some of the previous participants did not to return. In terms of my aims to engage wallers in conversation, although initially concerning, this development proved to be advantageous. Being part of a smaller group of people meant that teamwork and conversation often incorporated everyone. This meant I was participating among the entire group, rather than parts of it at a time, a challenge that I had not encountered during pilot study where groups were larger. The fewer numbers of participants meant that I was able to engage with people more frequently, and so develop a better relationship with each individual.



Figure 3-2: Site of Huntly Mental Health practice session in April 2013. Extension to wall built in November 2012. Located near Insch, Aberdeenshire. (Photo by author.)

Following completion of the farm wall, the remaining four sessions were sited at community owned allotments in Huntly town. HMH group leaders were interested in using their skills to improve an area within their community. In conjunction with the walling instructor and Yvonne Stephan of TCV, it was agreed that it would be possible to incorporate the second half of HMH walling programme with plans to develop a community plot in Glamourhaugh Allotment gardens (see Figure 3-3).



Figure 3-3: Glamourhaugh Community allotments, Huntly Aberdeenshire. (Photo by author.)

It was decided that two ‘L-shaped’ low dry-stone walls would be built on the plot using granite sourced from a local quarry. The top of the walls would then be laid with soil and turf and used as seating. The walls were sited opposite each other and acted as a ‘frame’ around the edge of the plot and also as a place for allotment users to gather. In time (see Figure 3-4) a dry-stone fire-pit was constructed in the centre of the plot and has since been used as a site for several community events.



Figure 3-4: 'L-shaped' dry-stone wall seats and fire-pit located in Glamourhaugh Community allotments, Huntly, Aberdeenshire. (Photo taken in October 2014 and used with permission of George Gunn.)

As the L-shaped walls performed a different function to the farm wall, they required slightly different construction techniques. In the photograph, the wall in the background was constructed first and under the instruction and supervision of David. In May 2013, a month after the first was finished, members of HMH group and I completed the second

wall without David's support. Stages of construction regarding both walls are shown in Figure 3-5, and Figure 3-7. The collection of photographs was important in this project due to its focus on the creative and aesthetic aspects of the dry-stone walling craft. From the outset of the PhD, I was committed to making my thesis a visually engaging text, offering the reader a range of images. Throughout the course of the walling sessions, I collected many images with the intention of using them to document the progress of the craft and supplement descriptive or explanatory fieldnotes. As Watson and Till (2010) assert, photographs served as a mnemonic prompt, assisting my recall of certain details, activities or observations which might otherwise have been forgotten. Short video clips were also used in this manner. During two of the walling sessions with HMH group, I experimented with video to capture the positioning of stones upon the wall. In the evenings as I wrote fieldnotes, I replayed the footage, paying close attention to the intricate movements of hand and stone. With the aid of video documentation, I was able to better articulate and appreciate the embodied and emotional experiences of engaging with stone. As a result, photographs and video-clips were used to complement other sources, rather than as data sources in themselves.

In addition to the informal conversation conduction during periods of observant participation, I also conducted three group interviews with members of HMH. Two of these interviews were conducted in May 2013 and the other in November 2013. Due to the changing commitments of various participants, unfortunately it was not possible to engage with all members of HMH who attended the first introductory walling session in November 2012. In practice, five members of HMH were involved in the group interviews, although once again due to personal commitments, it was not possible for all individuals to attend each interview. As noted by Madriz (2000) and Cloke *et al* (2004) group interviews (also known as focus or discussion groups) are an ideal opportunity to observe the interaction between participants. Therefore in response to the strong element of teamwork within dry-stone walling, I decided that in addition to observation of such interaction, group interviews would act as an additional forum for exploring the experience of working together. Beyond this, the presence of other group members acted as encouragement to some of the quieter participants, for whom a one-to-one conversation could seem intimidating. Although it has been noted by Kyle (2006) that the location in which interviews take place is important for influencing memory and stimulating relevant discussion, various factors contributed to the placement of group interviews. It would have been preferable to conduct interviews as close to the dry-stone wall as possible. However poor weather conditions and the practicalities of digitally recording the discussions were

prohibitive. As a result, all group interviews were conducted indoors. The first two interviews were scheduled following a day of walling in the hope that specific details of the activity could be easily drawn upon by the participants. The third and final group interview took place in November 2013 after the walling project was complete. The timing of this interview was almost precisely one year since the project began and subsequently allowed participants to reflect upon their engagement with the craft during this time. To assist in the recall of events, at this final meeting I provided participants with my photographs taken during the first instruction session in November 2012. Engaging with the images, individuals were reminded of thoughts and feelings during this first encounter with walling, thus allowing reflection on the emotional journey of the project. In general, group interviews provided scope for further extrapolation of the physical and mental engagement with walling than was practically possible during building sessions. The group meetings also offered an opportunity for HMH members to consider their participation as part of a team and thus reflect on how mutual respect, understanding and ultimately friendship had been fostered throughout the project.



**Figure 3-5: Digging out foundations. HMH group at Glamourhaugh allotments, April 2013.
(Photo by author.)**



Figure 3-6: Construction of first turf-top wall with HMH group at Glamourhaugh allotments, April 2013. (Photo by author.)



Figure 3-7: Construction of second turf-top wall at Glamourhaugh allotments, May 2013. (Photo by author.)

Additional Participatory Events

Though engagement with the walling practices of HMH group formulated the core of my participatory fieldwork, in addition I also attended various other practical events. As is shown in Table 3-3, these events included meeting with members of the South West Scotland branch of the DSWA; a site visit with a professional waller; participation in a two-day community project with West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association (WSDSWA); and attendance at two dry-stone walling competitions in northern England. With the exception of the community project with WSDSWA where I assisted in the construction of the wall, I was engaged in observation at all events.

Event	Date	Description	Location	Data Collected
South-West Scotland DSWA	21/04/12	Observed Walling Session	Craigengillan Estate, East Ayrshire, Scotland	Fieldnotes; photos; documentary material
Site Visit with Professional Waller	11/04/2013	Observed Professional Waller	Edinburgh	Fieldnotes; photos; sample quotation for professional walling work
WSDSWA Community Project	06/07/2013	Participated in Walling Project	Callander, Stirlingshire	Fieldnotes; photos; Field-drawings.
WSDSWA Community Project	07/07/2013	Participated in Walling Project	Callander, Stirlingshire	Fieldnotes; photos; Field-drawings.
Penrith Agricultural Show	27/07/2013	Observed Walling Competition	Penrith, Cumbria	Fieldnotes; photos; Field-drawings.
Brough Agricultural Show	15/08/2013	Observed Walling Competition	Near Brough, Cumbria	Fieldnotes; photos; interview with competitor

Table 3-3: Outline of additional participatory events with various individuals and organisations.

Beyond what was possible through participation with HMH group, attendance at these events provided additional insight to the performance of contemporary walling culture. These elements of walling culture were largely brought to my attention by interview participants, who considered it essential to my understanding of the craft that I engage further with these events. In terms of arranging opportunities in which to participate, this was mainly organised through established contacts, or via their friends or colleagues. With regard to walling competitions, it was necessary that I travelled to Cumbria as currently no competitive events occur in Scotland. In respect of the role of competitions in the establishment of the Stewartry Drystane Dyking Committee in the 1930s (and later the DSWA) and their current popularity within parts of England, I considered it important to observe practice in action. As was the case with both events at Brough and Penrith, it is commonplace for walling competitions to be located at annual agricultural shows. During

these visits I recorded observations in my field-diary as well as visually with a camera. As part of my approach to documentation, I also drew sketches with annotations of key observations (Figure 3-8). In addition to observation, I also engaged in informal conversation with organisers and spectators (some of whom were already known to me through other fieldwork activities). Due to the intense nature of the competition, it was generally difficult to speak to the competitors, however whilst attending Brough competition, I was able to briefly interview the only female competitor. Particularly during walling competitions and site-visit with professional waller, it was extremely intriguing to observe experienced individuals at work. It was during these events that I began to notice a fluidity and perceived ease with which an experienced waller engages with stone. Furthermore as professionals, participants frequently used hammers and chisels, allowing me opportunity to reflect on the embodied use of tools.

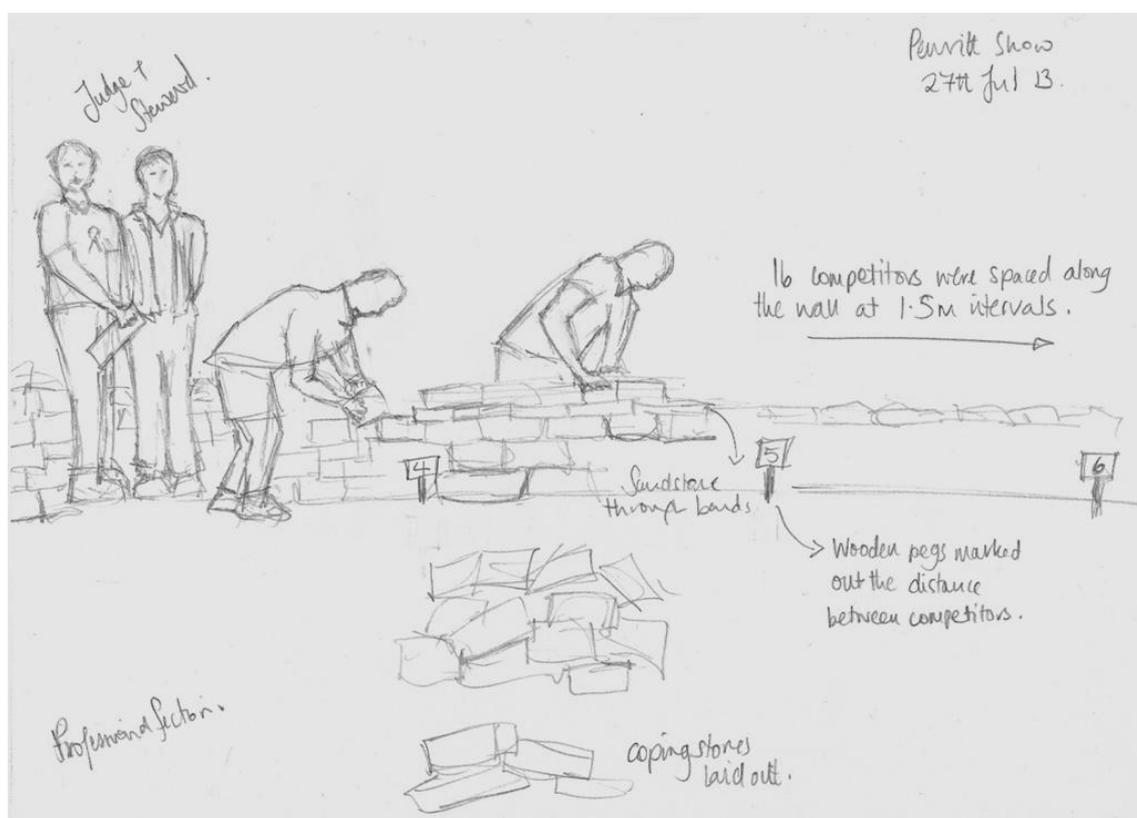


Figure 3-8: Sketch of dry-stone walling competition at Penrith Agricultural Show, July 2013.

Participation with the West of Scotland DSWA was at a community garden project in Callander, Stirlingshire, where an undulating dry-stone wall feature was being constructed. Through prior arrangement with the group chairman, I was able to participate over two days in July 2013. Though conversation with other wallers was inevitable, at this event rather than questioning others about their experiences of the activity, it was my intention to focus upon my own physical and mental experiences. Similar to walling sessions with

HMH, after each day I spent several hours reflecting on my experiences. Alongside fieldnotes, I also produced sketches that illustrate the spatial layout of the site, and also how I and other wallers interacted with it. As with the sketch produced of the walling competition, I included annotations, thus narrating my experiences and interactions with the stones and other wallers. Figure 3-9 and Figure 3-10 are examples of two sketches from this event.

In general these additional participatory events provided opportunities for me to engage with different aspects of walling culture beyond what occurred with HMH group. I was also able to focus on my own experiences of walling, rather than those of others, making it possible for me to further elaborate on my embodied and emotional interactions with stone as well as experiment with communicating graphically through field-drawings.

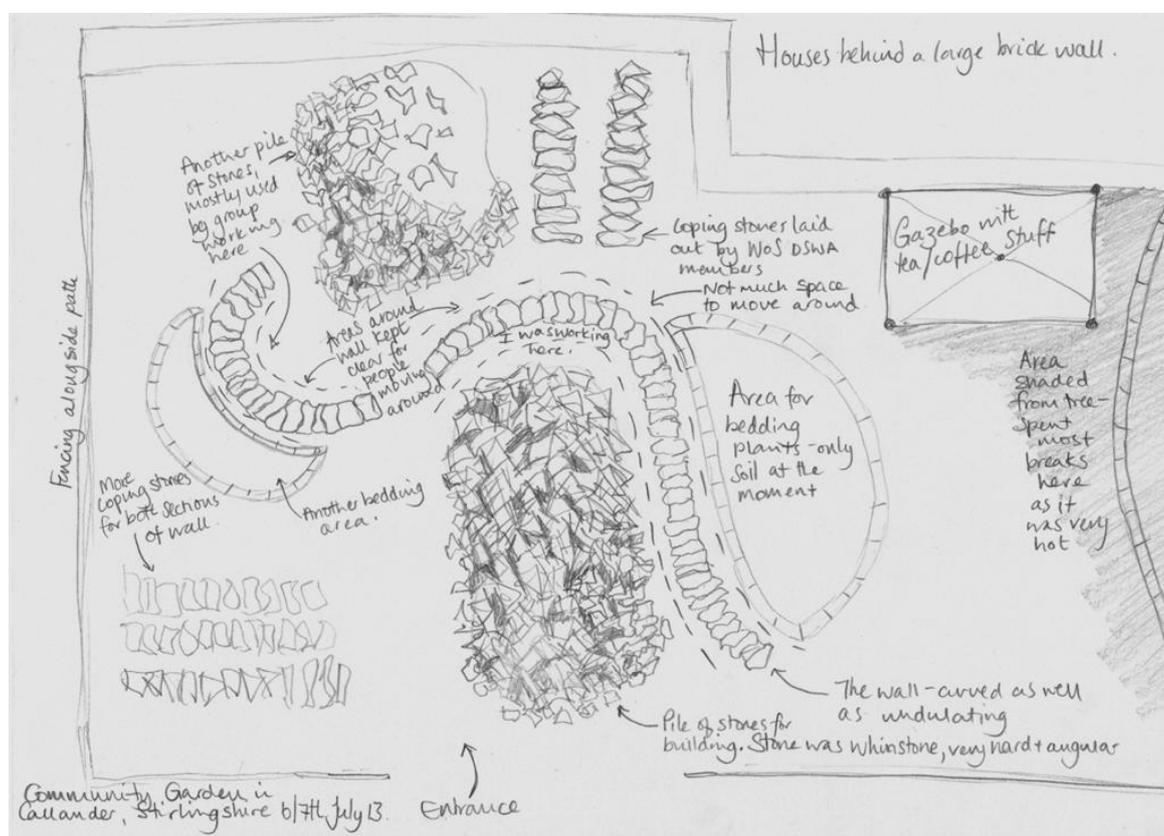


Figure 3-9: First sketch of walling project with West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association at a community garden in Callander, Stirlingshire, July 2013. Aerial view of site layout.

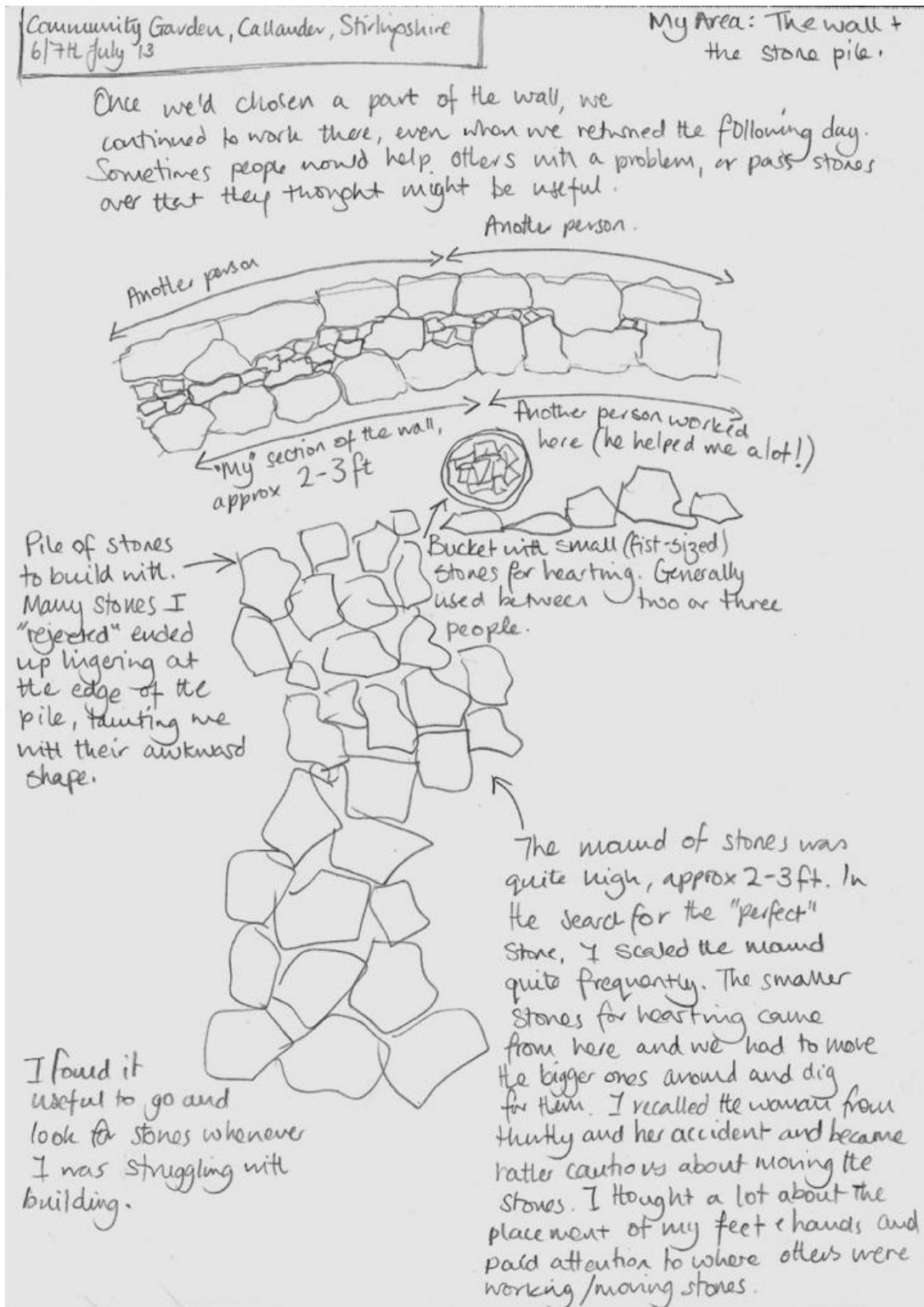


Figure 3-10: Second sketch of walling project with West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association at a community garden in Callander, Stirlingshire, July 2013. My immediate working area and how I navigated it.

Commentary on (Field) Drawings

Creating a visually engaging thesis was a response to the aesthetically appealing subject matter of dry-stone walls and the benefits of visual representation for intensive scholarship.

In addition to my use of photographs, I have used field-drawing as a way of communicating knowledge and exploring creative practice. In addition to those contained within this chapter, several other drawings feature as visual accompaniment throughout the thesis. The particular use of these drawings are described individually within the text, however, it is necessary at this stage to draw attention to the methodological meaning behind their production and inclusion.

My approach to drawing is informed by Clarke and Foster's (2012) consideration of field-drawing as a way of making and communicating knowledge. For them, drawing is a "process of recognition – both in terms of coming to know (about) something, but also as a way of coming to be known" (2012: 2). This position is influenced by the writings of John Berger, who suggests that:

"To draw is to look, examining the structure of appearances. A drawing of a tree shows, not a tree, but a tree-being-looked-at" (Berger 2005: 64 in Clarke and Foster 2012: 2)

As such, drawing is not a representation of an object or place, but a practice of observation. When drawing, it is the process of taking time to look closely that Clarke and Foster identify as essential when coming to know something in detail and identify its relationships within a wider environment. More specifically, they describe drawing as a "visualisation of experience" (2012: 10), a term which accurately accounts for much of my engagement with drawing within this thesis. For me, drawing exemplifies the embodiment of being an observing and sensing researcher. This is echoed by Hawkins who, with an interest in creative geographies, suggests that the primary justification for geography's creative (re)turn "is the potential of creative practices [to act] as a response to the discipline's ongoing orientation towards embodied and practice-based doings" (2015: 248). As a result of being engaged in field-drawing as part of a wider ethnographic arts project, Hawkins also noted that creative doings, of which drawing is an example, provides the means to "engage, research and re-present the sensory experiences, emotions, affective atmospheres and flows of life" (2015: 248). Drawing, therefore, is much more than a form of visual representation. It is in the *process* of sketching that the creator 'taps into' more-than-representational experiences and forms of knowledge. For me, sketching provided opportunities to make sense of emotions, embodied actions, affective atmospheres and spatial interactions. By pencil sketching, I was able to communicate some of these intensities onto the page, however if the *act* of drawing is taken seriously, communication is akin to a by-product. It is the creative experience of being engaged in drawing that is

most significant. In a study of carpentry and drawing, Ingold (2010) similarly suggests that less emphasis be placed on the finished object or image, and more on the process and practice of making. Like Berger, Hawkins also notes that drawing itself is a method of coming to know a place, subject or landscape. In her experience of prolonged periods of drawing, Hawkins noted that to look upon a landscape was not only to see:

“But was to become attuned to being in that place; to become aware of what the ground beneath me felt like – cold and damp or warmed by the sun; what it smelt like – salt on the wind from the sea; what it sounded like – the noises of the birds, the distant waves, the wind through the grass. To sit and draw in the same place for several days in a row sensitized me to the shifting patterns of the morning sun and to the rhythms of people around me. It was also to attend to things that might be missed, the smaller details that emerge through prolonged looking, things caught out the corner of an eye that could become the site of detailed focus and incidentals magnified under a watchful gaze” (2015: 255)

My decision to engage in field-drawing as part of my methodology is (in addition to dry-stone walling) another exercise in learning-as-doing. Within this project, the emphasis on sketching is not about the finished image, but more based on the process of looking, sensing, learning and creating. Finally, as Clarke and Foster (2012) suggest, it is hoped that these drawings act as an invitation for the reader – particularly those outside academia – to look closely and consider what is being experienced as I engage in walling practice. This does not mean to say that only one interpretation is possible, but rather that the drawing invites the viewer to share in knowledge and imagination, allowing for multiple interpretations.

Analytical Strategy

In terms of analysis and interpretation of periods of observant participation, this was ongoing throughout the duration of fieldwork. Earlier in the chapter it was noted that Cloke *et al* (2004) suggest data recording and analysis often ‘blur’ together, helping inform future practical and interpretative strategies. Similarly, Kitchen and Tate (2000) note that a reflexively engaged researcher creates field diary recordings which incorporate ‘on-the-spot’ analysis and interpretation. For example, as a walling participant, I was able to interpret the range of emotions and situations ongoing between myself and other participants. If engaged only as an observer, it is likely that such emotional interpretation may be overlooked. This was demonstrated in the acknowledgement of periods of silence within walling groups. When engaging with people, Crang (2005) notes how it is

important to consider moments of silence as much as moments of talk, since silence may indicate resistance or disagreement rather than complicity. In terms of walling practice, it was my experience that periods of silence could indicate feelings of tension or anxiety as well as those of contentment. The emotional value of these periods of silence was interpreted as a direct result of my close proximity to other wallers and concurrent participation in the activity. Upon recording these situations within my field diary, I did not simply describe the moments of silence as singular events, I was able to interpret them in terms of the emotions I experienced at the time. In respect of researcher reflexivity and ongoing interpretation of experience, Watson and Till (2010) note that participating in the field is about participating in the creation of knowledge alongside other people. As such, observant participation is more about “‘doing’ than it is about the procurement of facts” (Watson and Till 2010: 134). In respect of this approach, analysis of fieldnotes and group interview transcripts sought to consider the context of the activity, as well as the specifics of certain events.

In practical terms, once the observant participation phase of fieldwork was complete, I collated all of my fieldnotes, and as these were hand-written in notebooks, photocopied each and bound them in chronological order. After initially reading over the notes to familiarise myself with the data, I proceeded with a coding system, described by Watson and Till as an attempt to “identify general patterns, clarify connections and relations, develop possible insights and refine ideas” (2010: 128). In doing so, I highlighted key words, phrases and themes recurrent throughout the material. In the margins I wrote notes about these sections and assigned broad codes. Once I had completed this first stage with all of the fieldnotes, I returned and began to refine and develop connections between the themes and allocate more precise codes. In addition to the themes drawn from the data, these codes were also informed by the conceptual framework within which the thesis is based. Figure 3-11 and Figure 3-12 demonstrate how I used colour-coded adhesive tabs to identify the recurrence of each code. Within fieldnotes, there were four main themes which emerged: embodiment and the physical experience of walling; emotions experienced whilst taking part in the activity; the development of skill and familiarity with stone; the interpersonal relations associated with working in close proximity to others.

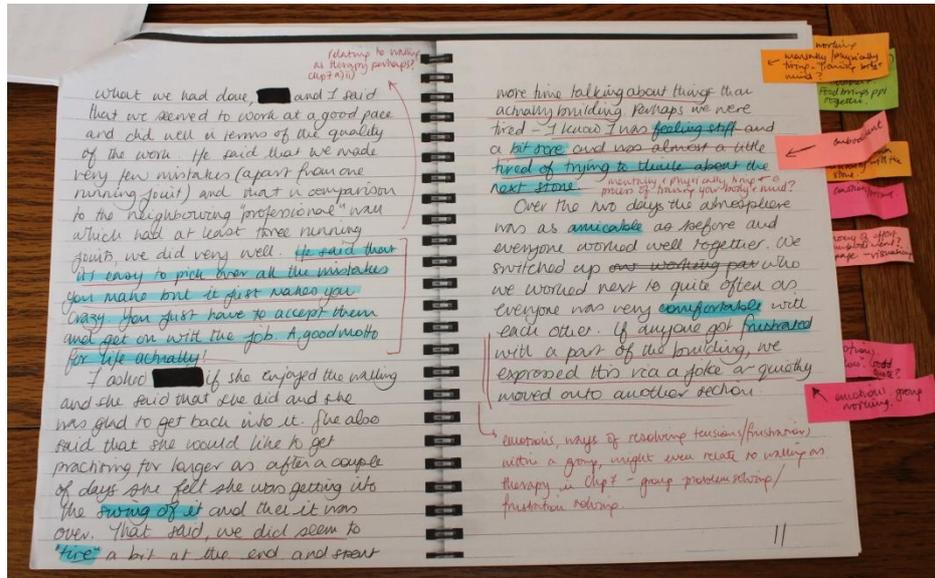


Figure 3-11: Fieldnote analysis, identification of key themes and allocation of codes. (Photo by author. Note names of participants have been redacted.)

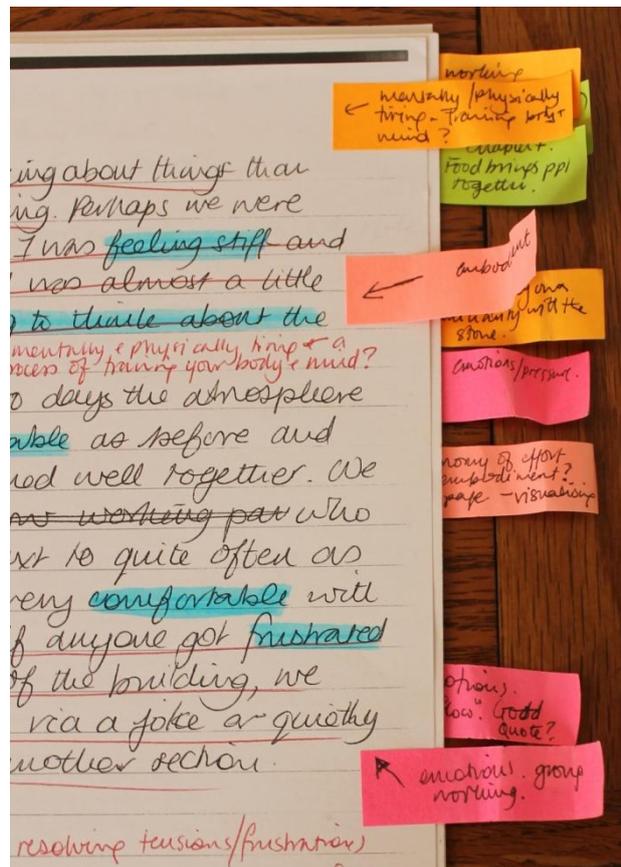


Figure 3-12: During analysis, key codes within fieldnotes were identified using colour-coded adhesive tabs. (Photo by author.)

The analysis of group interviews with HMH was broadly similar to individual interviews with more experienced wallers (detailed in the subsequent section). Each group discussion was transcribed and key themes identified. However further interpretation and

development of these themes was situated within the wider context of the HMH walling project. As an observant participant within the activities discussed during group interviews, I was able to recall and relate to some of the described events. It was thus essential that in addition to recognising my own position of influence within such group discussions, I also considered them as additional components within participatory engagement with HMH. In other words, it was not possible to consider the data generated by the three group interviews in isolation. As a result, thematic codes derived from group interviews were developed in conjunction with fieldnotes from practical walling situations.

Interviews with Professional and Serious Amateur Dry-Stone Wallers

In addition to semi-structured, conversational interviews conducted with hobbyist and volunteer wallers during periods of observant participation, I also conducted in-depth interviews with professional and serious amateurs. As was noted earlier in the chapter, the reason for doing so was in response to the extent of professional and amateur involvement within contemporary walling culture. To ignore these voices would be to present an incomplete image of contemporary walling activities. Interviews with these individuals therefore focused on walling in relation to employment and/or community projects, but also sought to draw upon the wealth of first-hand walling experience associated with quality work practised over many years. This section will provide a brief introduction to telephone interviews, outline recruitment methods and numbers of participants involved, as well as consider the practicalities and challenges associated with conducting interviews.

My approach to interviews with professional and amateur wallers is similar to the method employed during observant participation. It was my intention that interviews between myself and experienced craftspeople would be collaborative and open to interruption, agreement (or disagreement) and discussion (Laurier 1999; Cloke *et al* 2004). As is noted by McDowell (2010), in human geography, anthropology and other social sciences the collaborative interview has been favoured over more traditional, interrogative approaches for some time. The decision to conduct the majority of interviews over the telephone was borne of logistical and practical constraints. As shown in Table 3-4, the wide geographical distribution and often remote rural location of interviewees meant that travel to meet face-to-face with each individual would be time-consuming and costly. Although it has been noted that interviews in person are important for recognising non-verbal messages and cues (Berg 2001), it has also been suggested that in a comparison between transcripts of telephone and face-to-face interviews, no significant differences were found (Sturges and

Hanrahan 2004). Furthermore, previous employment had provided me with substantial experience of conducting in-depth interviews over the telephone, thus ensuring I felt confident in my ability to produce rich and valuable results.

Location of Interviewee	Number
Scotland ¹⁵	21
England	4
Wales	1

Table 3-4: Geographical location of interview participants.

With the express permission of the participant, each interview was digitally recorded (facilitated by an earpiece specifically designed for recording telephone calls) and later transcribed. However, owing to the varied and occasionally spontaneous nature of my methodological approach, not all interviews were conducted over the telephone. Table 3-5 shows that of the twenty-six interviews in total, twenty-three were carried out via telephone. One interview which took place face-to-face was the result of a previous interviewee telling a friend of my research project. On account of the individual being a short drive away from my location and only present in Scotland for a few days, it was decided that a face-to-face interview would be most appropriate. Another respondent, who asked not to be interviewed at all but still wished to be involved in my project, provided written responses to my interview questions. In the case of the short face-to-face interview, this individual was introduced to me at an outdoor walling event and volunteered to answer some brief questions. Of all interviews conducted, only three respondents were female, a bias indicative of the dominance of male wallers practising at professional and serious amateur levels.

Interview Type	Number of Interviewees
In-depth telephone interview	23
In-depth face-to-face interview	1
Written responses to interview questions	1
Short face-to-face interview	1

Table 3-5: Numbers and type of interview conducted with professional and serious amateur wallers.

¹⁵ Although the interview was conducted in Scotland, one participant was on holiday from North America and so the responses were in relation to walling culture within North America.

Interviewees were primarily recruited via personalised letters sent to every individual in Scotland recorded on the DSWA Register of Professional Wallers. This included wallers qualified with Initial, Intermediate, Advanced or Mastercraftsman certificates. As previously noted, efforts were made to contain the scope of the project to Scotland however as a result of existing contact with some individuals, interview participants from other parts of Britain (and beyond) were also included. Likewise in certain cases, contact had already been made with some of the professional wallers who were on the Scottish DSWA register. As a result, an invitation to take part in an interview was sent only to those individuals with whom I had no prior contact. Letters of invitation were sent in November 2012, with interviews commencing in December 2012. In addition to pre-existing contacts, word-of-mouth and recruitment via letter, two of the interview participants were recruited via an online forum. As part of an on-going search for historical documents or materials relating to walling, in October 2012 I posted an online request asking if any of the forum members had knowledge of such materials. Run by members of the DSWA, the forum comprised of professional, amateur, and hobbyist craftspeople. Although there was little return in the way of historical material, some of the members were sufficiently interested in my project that I invited them to interview. With the exception of two participants who were recruited later in the year, the majority of interviews were completed by the end of January 2013. A full list of interview participants with accompanying pseudonyms, highest level of DSWA qualification attained by each individual and date of interview and the duration is detailed in Table 3-6. As outlined in Table 3-7, the majority of interviewees were recruited via letters of invitation.

As previously mentioned, all telephone interviews and the one in-depth face-to-face interview were digitally recorded. Though it is widely acknowledged that the presence of a voice recorder may cause hesitancy and resistance in the interviewee (Cloke *et al* 2004; McDowell 2010) there seemed little evidence of this. The majority of participants were forthcoming with thoughts, opinions and stories and required little encouragement to talk. The interviews were semi-structured in nature but with sufficient flexibility to respond to unexpected diversions in discussion. As was hoped, many of the interviews became conversational, with the most interesting information being produced during moments of what Cloke *et al* describe as “unexpected chat” (2004: 152). However some more challenging questions, such as those based on ‘being in the zone’ or the perceived ‘therapeutic’ nature of walling required some rewording or further explanation. In some cases, interviewees ‘scoffed’ at these ‘soft’ questions and treated them with disregard. In an attempt to overcome these challenging situations, I often made light of the question and

attempted to re-word the subject in a way that I considered a better ‘fit’ for the individual. Although this only happened on a few occasions, I found that each time, once I had conceded the awkwardness of the question, the participants were more forthcoming with their responses. This situation is similar to that described by McDowell (2010) where it is sometimes necessary for the researcher to reveal something of him or herself, or their feelings, to make the interviewee feel more comfortable in their response. Indeed, it seemed that many of the participants were intrigued by me, a young woman, conducting research into a traditionally male-dominated craft. It must be noted that none of these individuals were ever derogatory about me or my ability to conduct such an investigation; rather it seemed to increase their interest. At the outset of the interviews, wallers were often keen to know a bit more about me and the aims of my project, allowing me to develop a rapport and thus improve the fluency of the conversation.

Interview Participant (Pseudonym)	Gender	Date of Interview	Length of Interview	Highest Level of DSWA Qualification Attained by Participant
Malcolm	male	04 December 2012	43 minutes	Intermediate
Doug	male	06 December 2012	94 minutes	Mastercraftsman
Paul	male	10 December 2012	49 minutes	Mastercraftsman
Graham	male	12 December 2012	32 minutes	Intermediate
Ian	male	12 December 2012	45 minutes	None
Tom	male	12 December 2012	69 minutes	None
Archie	male	14 December 2012	61 minutes	Advanced
Frank	male	14 December 2012	47 minutes	Initial
Ryan	male	15 December 2012	45 minutes	Intermediate
Brian	male	17 December 2012	46 minutes	Intermediate
Craig	male	18 December 2012	45 minutes	Intermediate
Mike	male	18 December 2012	32 minutes	Intermediate
Nick	male	09 January 2013	21 minutes	Intermediate
Katie	female	14 January 2013	53 minutes	Advanced
Adam	male	15 January 2013	46 minutes	Advanced
Alex	male	16 January 2013	54 minutes	Mastercraftsman
Terry	male	16 January 2013	37 minutes	Intermediate
Andrew	male	17 January 2013	45 minutes	Intermediate
Joe	male	22 January 2013	35 minutes	Initial
Peter	male	22 January 2013	50 minutes	Intermediate
Edward	male	24 January 2013	55 minutes	Intermediate
Stuart ¹⁶	male	24 January 2013	N/A	Advanced
Colin	male	29 January 2013	53 minutes	Intermediate
Gareth	male	29 January 2013	63 minutes	Advanced
Fiona	female	15 August 2013	20 minutes	Advanced
Stephanie	female	9 October 2013	25 minutes	None

Table 3-6: List of all interview participants.

¹⁶ One participant who preferred not to be interviewed and recorded instead provided written answers to the questions. Date of Interview therefore indicates the date which I received the written answers.

Method of Recruitment	Number of Interviewees
Letter of Invitation	18
Existing contact	3
Word of mouth	3
DSWA online forum	2

Table 3-7: Recruitment methods for professional and amateur waller interviewees.

Interview duration ranged from thirty minutes to two and a half hours, all of which I transcribed myself. This was a slow process, but allowed me to become familiar with the intricacies of the data, as well as begin the first stage of analysis. Once familiar with the data, I embarked on a process of open coding, described by Watson and Till as a form of “brainstorming” where the researcher revisits material to think about “possible ideas, themes and issues” (2010: 128). As interview transcripts were word processed, I used the ‘track changes’ tool in Microsoft Word to highlight key words and phrases, write notes and preliminary codes as comments. In a similar way to how I approached the analysis of participatory fieldnotes, I considered it important to be aware of the wider context of the interview situation. As MacKian notes, talk is “messy” and a rigid approach to coding, where focus is on the most recurrent and central themes of the material, risks overlooking similarly important, but less frequent “accents” (2010: 363). I was keenly aware that in conversation, people often convey meaning more through tone of speech than the words they use. MacKian suggests that a strict method of coding:

“May be doing little more than analysing the *text of the transcript*, when it is in fact the experience or story told by the research encounter which we *really* want to understand” (2010:363)

In line with MacKian’s suggestion, it was therefore essential that I did not base coding upon the text alone, but was alert to the meaning beyond the words and the *way* in which they were said. Once I was confident that my initial ‘brainstorming’ of codes had been developed sufficiently, I progressed onto axial coding, where I began to identify links between codes and finally establish thematic categories (Cloke *et al* 2004). Broadly speaking, some of these categories crossed-over with those identified in group interviews and participatory fieldnotes. These included the emotional and embodied engagements with walling as well as the process of becoming familiar with stone. Such overlaps were particularly interesting as it was possible to identify similarities and/or contrasts between professional and hobbyist engagements with walling. In combining these themes with the

analytical material from other methods, I then began to establish a premise for each empirical chapter.

Documentary Sources

To provide historical and contemporary context to the dry-stone walling craft, it was essential that I engage with a breadth of documentary material. The search for such material commenced early in the PhD journey, when I began to explore the historical origins of walling. During this time I established contact with several knowledgeable individuals who were happy to share material or guide me towards the source. This collecting process continued throughout much of the project, running alongside interviews and periods of observant participation. In part due to the long period of time in which collection took place, my archive of material became increasingly diverse. Magazine and newspaper clippings, both historical and recent; a locally published memoir of a waller in the early 20th century; pamphlets depicting walling techniques; historical country estate records of walling activities; photographs and written narratives of walling experiences were among some of the materials acquired. I considered my approach to collections as a ‘magpie-method’, where acquisition was opportunistic and resulted in a varied personal archive of walling related material.

Lorimer describes an opportunistic approach to research as a ‘make-do’ methodology, where “activities take place on-the-hoof, are improvised according to circumstance, conditions underfoot and things to hand” (2010: 258). Though Lorimer initially relates make-do methods to forms of historical inquiry, it is also noted that such an approach need not be limited to one geographical or cultural setting, but applicable to various types of fieldwork. During research at an abandoned Montana homestead, DeSilvey (2007) applies her own kind of make-do methodology to the collection and interpretation of everyday material objects. She describes the social and material relations between objects as “constellations” where “objects yield their stories through their alignment with other [material] remains” (2007: 404). Though it was not my aim to establish constellating narratives between my collections of walling materials, it has been possible to weave documentary materials into established walling narratives. The act of doing so provided context as well as points of contrast with contemporary walling practices, as exemplified by Robert Cairns’ memoir in Chapter 4.

The sourcing of this material was conducted in various ways. As previously noted, contact with individuals early in the PhD marked the commencement of documentary collection. In the months which followed, I also conducted keyword searches of online databases

including the National Archives of Scotland and National Library of Scotland. These searches provided records of the construction of dykes from the 17th century onwards as well as more recent (dating from 1930s) newspaper and magazine articles in which dykes or dyking featured. Contact with the archivist at the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland also yielded several references to walling within their own *Transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland*, which was in publication from 1799 to 1968. In recognition of the breadth of knowledge previously demonstrated to me by members of the walling community, I sought to identify other individuals who retained historical documentary materials. To do so, I compiled a list of each of the branches of the DSWA and sent speculative emails to their secretaries. Some yielded interesting responses, whilst others were ignored or forwarded on to more 'relevant' members of the walling community. In addition, I placed adverts within various magazines including *The Scot's Magazine*, *History Scotland* and the DSWA's own quarterly, *The Waller and Dyker*. In response to these articles I received several letters and emails from individuals who were keen to share stories of their own or family members' experiences of dyking. Some also drew my attention to relevant books or articles, though most of these I was already familiar with. In terms of appreciating how the contemporary walling craft is enacted through the DSWA, it was essential that I visited their archives at the head office in Cumbria. Assisted by the DSWA secretary, I was able to locate minutes of meetings from the early years of the organisation, records of demonstrations and competitions, back issues of *The Waller and Dyker* and various other documents charting the development of the DSWA and its members since its establishment in 1968.

This "collagist" (Lorimer 2010: 259) approach to gathering documentary material was further enhanced by my own photographic collection of dry-stone walls. Wanderings by foot, car and horseback frequently by-passed interesting examples of wall, some functional with built-in features such as lunkies, others tumbledown and in the process of being reclaimed by nature. In addition to admiring the aesthetics of these walls, many gave me the opportunity to examine construction techniques, stone type and location within the surrounding landscape. By engaging with the walls in such a way it was possible to regard them as an open-air museum of material sources, which when considered in conjunction with documents and personal accounts of walling, permitted the re-imagining of the historical, social and cultural narratives of these landscape features. This approach is echoed in DeSilvey's work at a Montana homestead, where she notes that she was involved in "imaginative recuperation" (2007: 403) of the social and material relations between objects and their location within the homestead. In doing so, she employs herself

as a “creative and catalysing element” (2007: 420) in the production of material narratives. Figured as a creative catalyst, the researcher becomes regarded as an instructive element within the production of knowledge. In respect of creative engagement with material sources and a practice-led approach to walling, it is useful to consider my position as reflexive researcher in greater detail.

Positionality and Methodological Challenges

In conducting ethnographic, practice-led research where there is a commitment to learn through the body (Crang 2005), it is necessary that the subjectivities and position of the researcher are considered in relation to the design, collection and analysis of data. Feminist theorists such as Haraway (1988), McDowell (1992), Rose (1997) and Butler (2001) have written extensively on the need to consider the effects of the researchers’ personal, social, economic and political identities relative to their research participants. More simply, Rose recognises that the “sort of knowledge made depends on who its makers are” (1997: 306). Thus in order to be aware of how types of knowledge are constructed, it is essential that researchers reflect on their own positionality and how this might impact upon the power relations existing between researcher and research participant. In practice however, as noted by Rose (1997), the reflexive examination of positionality can be challenging, if not impossible, to achieve. She bases her argument on the understanding that thought, power and knowledge are inextricably linked, and thus it is impossible for researchers to know neither everything nor “survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it” (1997:319). Instead Rose suggests that though attempts are made to articulate the position of the researcher, the situating of knowledge is inherently uncertain and open to interpretation. In moving forward with this assessment, it stands that though we cannot identify (and thus compensate) for all of our positionalities, they are taken into the research process with us. For example upon meeting each new walling group (including HMM and those during pilot study) I was concerned about the way in which I presented myself and how this may have impacted negatively upon group relations. My purpose-bought outdoor clothing, my quiet voice and the fact that I wear glasses and thus look ‘scholarly’, all contributed to my concern that I would encounter difficulties as a result of my perceived positionalities. Furthermore, as I handed out my ‘official-looking’ information sheet and consent forms (as required by the university ethics committee), I was anxious about how these documents drew attention to my university education and associated social and economic status. As a result, though I was aware of my positionality and how it might be interpreted by research participants, there was little I

could do to change this. As Cloke *et al* note of feminist geographer Linda McDowell, it is impossible and wrong for her to leave behind her personal world since:

“Who she is (all the baggage of her own position) is so very pertinent to what she can achieve in her research. It shapes her gaining of access to particular research situations rather than others; it shapes her ability (and willingness) to build ‘research alliances’ of empathy, trust and dialogue between her and the people whom she researches; it shapes what findings she can obtain, the ways in which she will interpret these findings, and her sense of what is and is not appropriate to reveal in final write-ups of projects undertaken” (2004: 29-30)

Indeed, I have found this true of my own positionalities and research experience. My identity as a young woman, engaging in a male-dominated craft, was considered a curiosity by many (male) interviewees, and I suspect, acted as encouragement to participate in my research. Furthermore, being of comparable age to some of the participants in HMH group made it easier to engage in casual conversation, allowing me (and the participants) to feel more comfortable with my presence in the group. I also suspect that my obvious lack of proficiency at walling actually helped establish me as a trusted and respected member of the group. When introducing myself to each new group of participants, though I had explicitly described myself as a novice waller, several individuals considered me an ‘expert’ and demonstrated this by looking to me for direction or assistance when the walling instructor was absent. Over time, as they worked alongside me at the wall, it quickly became apparent that I was certainly no expert. Like them, I visibly struggled with tasks and often required assistance. The engagement of walling thus acted as a ‘leveller’ to my interactions with research participants. Though my personal geographies remained different to those with whom I interacted, the act of walling together, of sharing emotional and physical challenges, meant that these positionalities became less concerning.

Beyond the challenges associated with positionality, the methodological structure of my practice-based fieldwork required that I engage reflexively as a waller-in-training, but also be alert to how other novice wallers experienced the activity. In practice, particularly in the early stages when I was still becoming familiar with walling, this was a rather challenging objective. Due to the intense nature of the work, I frequently found myself forgetting to be ‘researcher’ and was instead wholly focussed upon my own engagement with the task. Though problematic in terms of being alert to the experiences of others, it was nonetheless important in my genuine appreciation of learning the craft. As noted by Dewsbury, the idea of practice-based research:

“Is to get embroiled in the site and allow ourselves to be infected by the effort, investment, and craze of the particular practice” (2010: 326)

In time, I therefore realised that I could not *always* be participant or *always* observant researcher and therefore had to find the most appropriate balance for all objectives. Indeed, as suggested by Watson and Till (2010), ethnographic research is about negotiating the ‘here’ and ‘there’ and finding the best way in which to articulate difference. As I progressed through the observant participation component, it became necessary for me to embrace these tensions and challenges by ‘going with the flow’ and accepting that it was important for me to be flexible when things did not go to plan. Within my research there were several instances where plans were cancelled, changed or redeveloped, with the majority beyond my control. Though frustrating and occasionally stressful, as noted by Cloke *et al* (2004), it is up to the researcher to think on their feet, modify their approach and accept that they cannot always know how things will turn out. In further considering the ‘messiness’ of doing research, Thrift (in Crang 2005) provides a candid description of fieldwork:

“Though fieldwork is often portrayed as a classical colonial encounter in which the fieldworker lords it over her/her respondents, the fact of the matter is that it usually does not feel much like that at all. More often it is a curious mixture of humiliations and intimidations mixed with moments of insight and even enjoyment” (Thrift 2003: 106 in Crang 2005: 231)

In conducting my own research, this perspective struck me as both accurate and encouraging. Though I entered the fieldwork process anxious about my positionality and ability to be both an effective researcher and participant, in the practice of doing so, it has become clear to me that it is precisely these elements that have allowed me to engage sincerely and candidly with research participants and the skills of walling.

Conclusions

This chapter has presented the methodological approach employed in the collection and analysis of data within this project. It has provided an overview of all components involved in addressing the complexities of British dry-stone walling culture. At the core of this methodology has been a commitment to an ethnographic, practice-led approach to understanding the walling craft and experiences of practitioners. In fulfilment of this commitment, methods including observant participation, in-depth interviews and documentary sourcing have been brought together to produce a complementary cache of

data. It had also been shown that within this methodological approach, there has been scope for experimentation and creative engagement with other methods including film-work and field-drawing. This chapter has also shown how it has been necessary to adapt fieldwork activities in response to unforeseen methodological challenges and to capitalise on new opportunities. In conducting practice-led research, where a commitment is made to do work *through* the body (Crang 2005), it has been necessary to consider the inherent positionalities that accompany me in doing so. Far from being able to leave these behind, or feeling obliged to do so (Cloke *et al* 2004), they have been essential in allowing me to fully engage in the emotional and embodied aspects of walling. In the following four chapters I combine these experiences with the data I have collected in ways which seek to enliven the historical, social and cultural geographies of dry-stone walling.

Chapter 4 : A History of the Dry-Stone Craft and Craftspeople

*“A weel-built dyke’s a bonnie sicht
For ilka body’s e’e,
A source o’ keen and rare delight
Wherever it may be.
Whilst man may come and man may goe,
Since life and man must sever,
If heed to our sma’ needs ye pay
We weel micht last forever.”¹⁷*

This first empirical chapter opens with a focus on the materiality of dry-stone walls, particularly in relation to building techniques and variation in form and function. As physical indicators of underlying geological strata, it is possible to compile a particularised regional geography of walls and walling technique. To do so I draw upon a variety of dry-stone literature, including documents and pamphlets published by knowledgeable practitioners and organisations such as the BTCV and DSWA. Additionally, this section acts as a glossary to the many dry-stone terms, a specialist lexicon which is geographically variable. In Chapter 2 it was noted how 17th and 18th century Enclosure walls were often built according to strict guidelines enforced by Enclosure Commissioners. In examining the materiality of the dry-stone wall, it will be shown that many of these guidelines remain embedded within contemporary dry-stone practices, revealing a craft rich in landscape heritage. However analysis of this literature also highlights an absence of the embodied, emotional and material experiences associated with dry-stone walling. In providing a more nuanced and embodied appreciation of the history of walls and walling, the subsequent section focuses upon the memoirs of a dyker working in the Scottish Lowlands in the early 20th century. In addition to enlivening the experiences of Pre-War walling practice, this narrative also acts as a point of reference from where it is possible to trace the development of the craft and profession into the 21st century. In drawing attention to its role in the evolution of the craft, the final section of this chapter formally introduces the DSWA of

¹⁷ Extract from ‘Reflections of a Dry Stane March Dyke’ by John Wilson of Gatehouse, quoted in Rainsford-Hannay (1957: 99).

Great Britain. Established in 1968 as little more than a community of volunteers with a shared interest in walling, it has since developed to become an internationally respected association. As well as providing an historical account of the association, attention is paid to the accidental and designed nature of the organisation and the methods by which it aims to find a secure place for dry-stone crafts in Britain's contemporary cultural economy. I demonstrate how the DSWA has contributed significantly to the social and cultural diversity of walling practice. Following discussion of the place of the DSWA in Britain, it is noted that contemporary walling is by no means exclusively framed by the organisation, outlining examples of British walling that exist outside the auspices of the DSWA.

Dry-Stone Wall Construction: Fundamentals and Variation

The geology of the British Isles is extremely diverse, ranging from dense granite boulders in parts of Scotland to softer sandstone and limestone of the English midlands. Wall building during the enclosure period used stone quarried from nearby hillsides and was rolled or moved by horse and cart to the worksite (Rainsford-Hannay 1957). The use of stone from nearby sites thus provided dry-stone walls with characteristics representative of their local geology. The skill of walling lies in the ability of the waller to make best use of the available materials and as a result, distinctive regional styles have emerged to reflect the stones found within each locality (DSWA 2004a). Despite the variation in style, the basic techniques of the craft have remained similar since the enclosure acts. The shape, density and arrangement of minerals within the stone determine how it can be split, shaped and used within a dry-stone wall. Geologists classify rocks according to how they were formed, which provides them with distinctive characteristics. They may be sedimentary, where eroded particles accumulate and become compacted over time. As a result of the minerals having settled in layers, many sedimentary rocks have distinctive bedding planes, allowing wallers to shape the stone and create smooth and flat surfaces (DSWA 2002). Igneous rocks are formed when molten lava cools, either below the surface of the Earth (intrusive) or at the surface (extrusive). Though natural joints or points of weakness may occur in igneous rocks, they do not have any bedding planes and are generally irregular in shape (DSWA 2007). Being hard and brittle, they are also very difficult to shape with a hammer and are therefore often used in their natural, irregular shape. Metamorphic rocks are the result of sedimentary or igneous rocks being subjected to high pressure and temperature beneath the Earth's surface, causing the minerals within to change. During this transformation, some rocks, such as slate or gneiss, develop new planes of weakness called 'cleavage planes,' which like bedding planes allow the rock to split easily (DSWA

2007). Other metamorphic rocks such as quartzite do not have this feature and like igneous rocks, can be difficult to shape (DSWA 2002).

As a result, the stone's complex materiality has significant influence on the style of wall. If the stone is of uniform shape and thickness, such as sandstone or limestone, then the wall can be built in courses (see Figure 4-1). A coursed style is one where the stones are of similar dimensions and are laid onto the wall in horizontal layers (DSWA 2004a). If stones are irregular in shape and cannot be modified using a hammer, then a random style of stone placement is employed (see Figure 4-2). The random style accommodates the irregular shape and size of the stones and although a random wall may not look as neat as one that has been coursed, both require a skilled and experienced hand.



Figure 4-1: A Derbyshire coursed wall, built from gritstone, a course-grained type of sandstone. (Photo by author.)

The fundamentals of contemporary dry-stone wall construction remain largely unchanged from the Enclosures period. As was mentioned in the previous section, enclosure commissioners were often specific about the construction method required for robust and purposeful agricultural walls. This included specification of wall height, width and the number of ‘throughbands’ – large, flattish stones improving the strength of the wall. Drake (2008) describes the specifications outlined by the commissioners appointed to a collection of walls near Kirby Lonsdale, Cumbria:

“The wallers were to remove soil to a depth of six inches along the line of the wall, to provide a foundation three feet six inches wide. The wall was to be six feet high including the topstones, and sixteen inches wide at the top. Three bands of throughs were to be

included, at suitable heights, with nine throughs per band, per rood. A rood was approximately seven yards, meaning that the wall would contain twenty-seven throughstones every seven yards” (2008: 15)

Though the precise measurements of wall construction varies according to stone type, physical geography of the site and intended purpose of the wall, the fundamentals of wall construction as established by the commissioners remains embedded within walling practice today. The following section outlines the foundations of good dry-stone wall construction. In doing so, it introduces some of the specialist terminology associated with walling, some of which varies geographically. Where necessary, illustrations are provided to assist with explanation or clarification of the process. In recognition of the variations within wall function and regional style, the section entitled ‘Form and Function’ aims to explain the reasons for such differences.

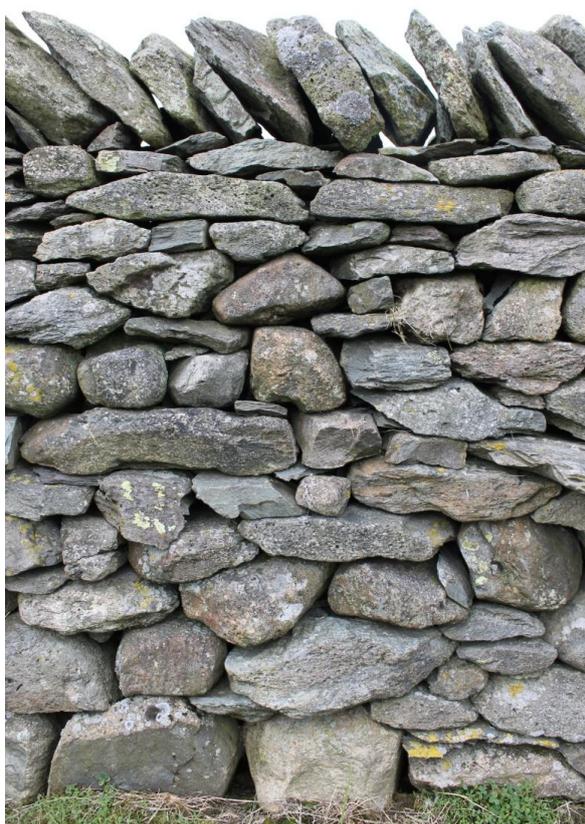


Figure 4-2: A wall built in random arrangement using a type of igneous rock from Borrowdale in Cumbria. (Photo by author.)

Dry-stone Techniques

As experienced waller Lawrence Garner (1984) notes, the intelligent appreciation of a dry-stone wall relies upon a thorough understanding of the principles of building. The

construction of a dry-stone wall is predicated upon the careful placement of stones to maximise gravitational and frictional forces that work together to create a strong and durable structure (Drake 2008). The experienced waller must therefore understand how the weight and frictional properties of different stones are fundamental to the successful construction of a dry-stone wall. As mentioned previously, stone types have different characteristics, meaning slightly different techniques are necessary to make best use of them. Walls are therefore built in a style most appropriate to the type of stone available, demonstrating the ingenuity of historical and contemporary wallers at making the best of a stone's materiality. Since stone type varies according to geology, a regional geography of the dry-stone craft can be charted.

In Britain, agricultural walls are usually constructed in one of two ways. The most common style is a double wall (see Figure 4-3), where two sides of a wall are constructed in an interlocking fashion and connected by an infill of tightly packed stones (DSWA 2004a). The other style is known as a single wall (see Figure 4-4), where only one wall of stones is used. Single walls are common in the south of Scotland where only large and irregular shaped boulders are available and the interlocking of stones is difficult (DSWA 2002). Owing to the irregular nature of the stones, single walls are usually built in random arrangement and often contain small gaps through which daylight can be seen. In certain parts of Britain however, exceptions to these two main styles do exist. Galloway dykes of south-west Scotland are a combination of double and single style. The base is built in double and the top half in single style (Rainsford-Hannay 1957). Cornish hedges and Welsh 'clawdd' or 'cloddiau' are other unique variations. They include a core of soil or earth around which a wall of stones are built and are sometimes topped with turf (DSWA 2004a). Despite these variations, by far the most common style of wall in Britain is the double wall. In order to demonstrate the techniques of dry-stone construction, guidelines are based upon those of a double wall.



Figure 4-3: A double wall, built in coursed arrangement using sandstone from the Yorkshire Pennines. (Photo by author.)



Figure 4-4: A single style wall built using rounded granite boulders from south-west Scotland. Note how daylight can be seen through the gaps between stones. (Photo by author.)

Though dry-stone walling requires few tools, there are some that are near enough essential. The use of tools varies according to the preference of the waller, but the majority are in agreement of the most important and useful pieces of equipment. For example, a small walling hammer is generally considered to be an essential part of a wallers kit. Though the over-working of stones with a hammer is discouraged in walling, a hammer is useful for chipping off awkward lumps or breaking stones into smaller pieces (BTCV 1986; Drake 2008). There are various types of walling hammers, the size and shape of which is largely determined by the kind of stone to be worked. As a result, regional variation exists for some hammers, such as the Scottish dyking hammer and Cotswold hammer (BTCV 1986).

Other useful tools include a sledge hammer for breaking large pieces of stone; a spade for digging foundations and a mattock to help prise buried stones from the earth (BTCV 1986; DSWA 2004a; Drake 2008). Batter-frames, string-lines and pins are other important pieces of equipment. Figure 4-5 shows a diagram of a batter-frame which is used to ensure the wall is built to the correct profile and as the structure increases in height, that the courses are kept level (BTCV 1986). The frame may be built of wood or metal and in such a way that it can be adjusted to accommodate profiles of different walls. Other items such as a tape measure and spirit level are also useful, particularly for less experienced wallers, or if the structure is complex and requires precise work (BTCV 1986). Unlike walls built during the enclosure period requiring stone to be quarried and carted to the site, few walls today are built from material dug from a nearby hillside. Most contemporary agricultural walling involves the repair of gaps, or tumbledown sections, where stone is simply collected from where it has fallen. In cases where a new wall is being built, or if the fallen material has been buried or removed, it is necessary that stones from a commercial quarry are sourced and delivered to the site. For this purpose, it is preferable to use local stone to ensure continuity with other walls in the landscape (BTCV 1986).

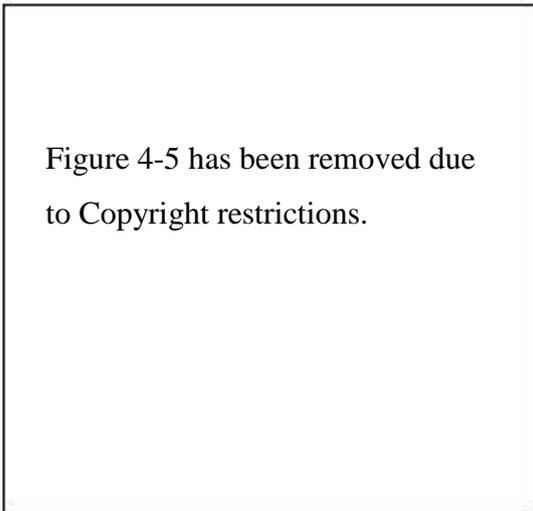


Figure 4-5 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-5: A wooden batter-frame with plumb bob and line to ensure the frame is positioned correctly. (Figure removed due to Copyright restrictions.)

A cross-sectional diagram of a completed double wall is shown in Figure 4-6. It identifies many of the features common to dry-stone walls of this type. It clearly shows the two sides, or faces of the wall, supported by small pieces of angular stone known as filling, packing, or in Scotland, hearting. As evidenced by its name, the hearting plays an extremely important role in the strength and structure of the wall. The outer faces of the wall rely upon a firm centre, without which they would be liable to slump, resulting in wall

collapse (Drake 2008). Hearting therefore must be packed carefully, with little space remaining between each stone. ‘Keep your heart up’ is a commonly used phrase by Scottish wallers, emphasising the importance of ensuring hearting is brought up to the level of the face stones before moving onto the next layer (BTCV 1986). As Rainsford-Hannay (1957) points out, hearting is a resonant term for this part of the wall. Not only does it form the core of the wall, but the quality of hearting can mean the difference between a poor or healthy wall. However it is also the case that a wall with poorly placed or little hearting can still look good from the outside. It is only in time, when sections of the wall begin to slump inward and fall, that poor hearting reveals itself (Rainsford-Hannay 1957). Walls, however, may also fail for a variety of other reasons, such as poorly laid foundation or face stones. When walls do fail, it is common for hearting stones, being the smallest in the structure, to be washed away and lost to the earth. It is therefore important that the waller has a ready supply for the repair of a gap or construction of a new wall. It is sometimes necessary that hearting stones are created from breaking up other stones, particularly those which are awkwardly shaped and tricky to use elsewhere in the wall (Drake 2008). This is a task in which sledge and walling hammers are extremely useful.

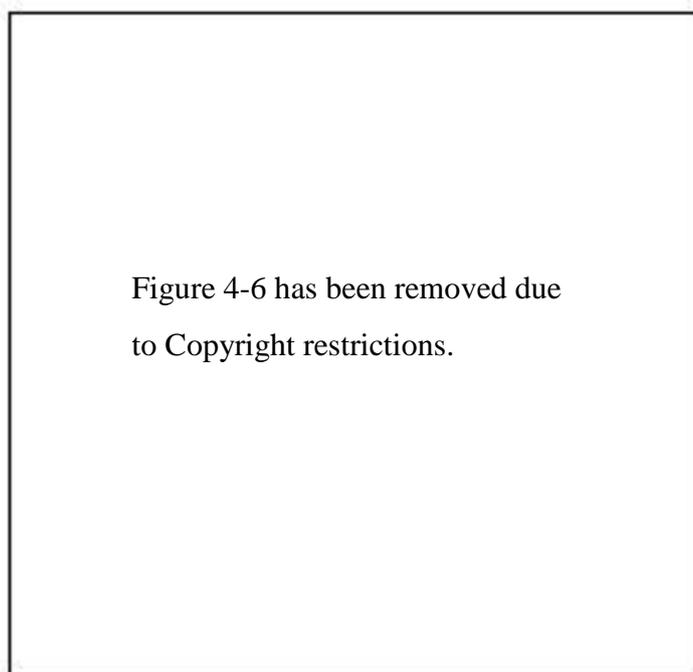


Figure 4-6: A cross-section of a double wall, identifying each of the features. (Figure removed due to Copyright restrictions.)

The batter or slope of the wall is another key feature that helps improve the strength of the wall. Though dimensions will vary according to the desired height, it is generally accepted that the width at the base should be twice the width of the wall measured just beneath the

cope stones (DSWA 2004a). Once the waller knows the height and width of the wall at the base, the angle of batter can be set. Batter-frames, pins and nylon string are used to ensure the angle of batter remains consistent throughout the length of the wall. The construction of the frames will vary according to the dimensions of the wall, meaning that the waller has to establish the exact measurements before work can begin. Figure 4-7 shows how a batter-frame and guide-lines are used to repair a gap in a wall. When constructing free-standing walls, two batter-frames are necessary, one at either end of the wall, connected by guide-lines (BTCV 1986). When positioning guide-lines, a tape measure and spirit level are useful for ensuring lines are even and level. The waller therefore uses the line as a guide to the profile of the wall (BTCV 1986). Stones must be laid flush with the line if the wall is to be neat and uniform. As the height of the wall increases, the lines are moved up the batter-frames and repositioned.

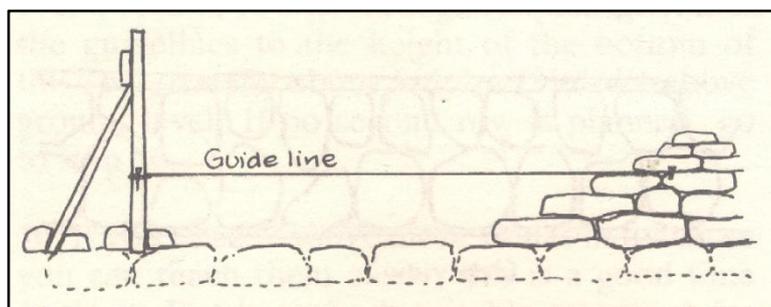


Figure 4-7: Illustration of how batter frame and guide line are used to ensure the height of the wall and degree of batter is uniform across a section of wall. (Source: BTCV (1986: 66). Used with permission.)

Correctly placed foundation stones, also known as ‘footings’ (Drake 2008), ‘founds’ or ‘foonds’ in Scotland, are of great importance to the longevity of the wall. A firm, level base for the wall ensures that stones built above do not tilt or sink, thus maintaining the integrity of the wall (Drake 2008). Though a clichéd term, it is well known by wallers that “a wall is only as good as its foundations” (BTCV 1986: 65). Once the area for building is marked out and a shallow trench dug, the foundation stones can be positioned. They are usually the largest, and if possible, the flattest in the collection of stones available (Garner 1984; Drake 2008). In order to provide a secure base and maximum surface area onto which the next layer can be built, it is essential that the long edges of the foundation stones are laid *into* the wall rather than along. This is one of the key principles of walling and is also known as placing the “end in, end out” (Drake 2008: 37). The subsequent layers or courses of stones are also laid in this way, ideally with greater length protruding into the wall than illustrated in Figure 4-6.

When layering the stones in courses it is also important to use good, flattish stones to ensure they sit as securely as possible (BTCV 1986). The outer sides of the wall are known as the ‘faces’ and the stones that form it as ‘face-stones’ (Drake 2008). When building a coursed wall, if possible, stones of similar height should be used to ensure the courses are built up in equal levels (DSWA 2004a). It is at this stage the waller must ‘keep their heart up’ as the laying of each new course requires the infill of hearting to be built up. When building the faces, the waller must also be aware of another important walling mantra: “put two stones on one; on stone on two” (Drake 2008: 48). This is also known as crossing joints, where the length of a stone is placed on top of the joint of neighbouring stones (see Figure 4-8). The joints are the weak points of the wall and crossing therefore prevents the weakness from progressing further (BTCV 1986). If a waller is not careful in the placement of stones then a ‘running joint’ will form, compromising the integrity of the wall.



Figure 4-8: A wall built in sandstone illustrates the crossing of joints. It is also known as laying one stone upon two and two stones upon one. (Photo by author.)

Another notable feature of the double wall illustrated in Figure 4-6 is the throughband, or throughstone. As the cross-section shows, throughbands extend from one side of the wall to the other and are usually placed halfway up the wall (DSWA 2004a). The point of the throughband is to tie the two faces together and maintain the “wall’s equilibrium by distributing the weight of the upper courses equally onto both faces below” (BTCV 1986: 72). From midpoint to midpoint they are usually placed no more than one metre apart and ideally should lie flush with the faces on either side (DSWA 2004a). Throughstones, therefore increase the stability and strength of a wall. As noted previously, during the enclosures period, commissioners specified the number of throughbands to be built into the walls. A good number of throughbands were therefore used as an indication of the strength and quality of a wall. Though tricky to identify by the inexperienced viewer, to the well-

trained eye of the commissioner they are relatively easy to spot. It has also been suggested that some enclosure wallers made it easier for commissioners to identify throughstones, and therefore prove the wall met their guidelines, by having them protrude slightly from the face of the wall (Drake 2008). This practice, however, can be risky. Positioned at a convenient height, cattle may use the protruding throughstone as a scratching post, thus loosening the top half of the wall (Rainsford-Hannay 1957; Hart 1980; Drake 2008). Although throughstones are important for improving strength and stability, not all double walls have them (BTCV 1986). This is usually a result of the correct size of stones being unavailable and in some cases, three-quarter length throughstones, whose tails overlap in the middle of the wall, are used instead (DSWA 2004a).

A dry-stone wall is incomplete without coping stones. Coping is essential in protecting the lower part of a wall. Without copestones, the wall would collapse in a very short period of time (Drake 2008). As previously noted, the width of the wall just below the copestones should be half the width of the wall base (DSWA 2004a). When the waller approaches the top of the wall, the surface must be prepared for the positioning of copestones. In some parts of the country, the top of the wall is levelled off with wide, flat stones known as coverbands (DSWA 2004a). They are said to have several purposes. In a similar way as throughstones, coverbands bind the two faces of the wall together again, but also prevent rainwater from cascading through the centre of the wall and affecting the placement of the hearting (Hart 1980). Elsewhere it has been suggested that if positioned so that they project a few inches from either side of the wall, the coverbands will dissuade sheep from jumping the wall (BTCV 1986). Whether coverbands are used or not, the waller must ensure the surface onto which the copestones are to be laid are as level and secure as possible. To expedite the setting of copestones, it is helpful if wallers identify and set aside useful coping stones either during the build or at the start (DSWA 2004a). Good coping stones are ideally the same width of the wall and relatively thin in shape (Drake 2008). Styles of coping can vary significantly across the country, depending upon the type of stone available and preferred method of positioning (Drake 2008). For example, some are placed on the wall at an angle, whilst others are positioned vertically. To ensure the copestones are of comparable height, the waller – usually by eye – assesses the average height of the material available and constructions a string-line as a guide between the tops of two cope stones positioned at either end of the wall section (DSWA 2004a). In the desired style, stones are then laid carefully onto the wall, with their tops almost touching the guideline. Where a stone falls short of the line, they are built up with flat stones beneath them. If the stone is too large, they can be dressed into the desired shape. It is

essential that each coping stone is wedged tightly against its neighbour and secured on its base with small wedge-shaped pinning stones. Figure 4-9 illustrates how string lines are used to guide positioning of coping stones to achieve a consistent height. Well secured coping stones, of similar height and width, are hallmarks of a well-constructed dry-stone wall. Though the coping is the crowning glory of most dry-stone walls, it is essential that the waller works with care and attention, at all stages of construction, ensuring each stone is secure in its location before moving onto the next.



Figure 4-9: Guidelines are used to ensure the height of the coping stones is similar throughout the length of the wall. (Photo by author.)

This section has introduced and explained some of the key rules that exist within walling. Some of these phrases have been quoted so frequently they have become established within the walling vernacular as traditional forms of instruction. The simplicity of phrases such as ‘one upon two, two upon one’ and ‘cross your joints,’ speak of the straightforward, yet rigorous method required to produce a robust wall. However the particular beauty of the phrase ‘keep your heart up,’ is in its dual purpose. Not only does it extol the virtues of keeping the hearting stones up to the level of the face stone, but it also acts as a form of encouragement to the flagging craftsperson. Excepting this phrase, and others which refer to ‘getting an eye in’, within the walling literature there is very little acknowledgement of the embodied or emotional experience of walling. Many of the aforementioned texts are fairly dry in tone and only technically descriptive, with little or no attention paid to the physical actions of the craftsperson. In an attempt to bring the waller into the study of dry-stone technique, Chapter 6 uncovers elements of embodied and emotional receptiveness associated with developing dry-stone skill.

Though regional variations on dry-stone wall form and function were briefly mentioned within this section, the following paragraphs expand upon these differences. In demonstration of the strong geographical nature of walls and walling practice in Britain, the subsequent section will pay specific attention to varying functions and styles of walls seen throughout the landscape.

Form and Function

Dry-stone is an extremely adaptable method of construction. Wallers can make use of almost any type of stone in the construction of a free-standing wall. Though most examples are based on agricultural enclosures, the flexible nature of stone means dry-stone walls can take many forms and fulfil a variety of functions. One such example are dry-stone retaining walls, used to hold back earthen banks (Drake 2008). They are often used to form terraces, which improve the functionality of the land as well as help counteract soil erosion and slump on steep hills (DSWA 2004a). Dry-stone terraces are common in various parts of Europe where steep slopes make land cultivation difficult. In mountainous areas of the Mediterranean, where stone is in abundance, terraces and other dry-stone structures such as houses and barns are commonplace (Paxton 2011). In southwest Germany, dry-stone terraces dating back to the 15th century were used to improve soil management for vineyard production (Petit *et al* 2012). More recently, terraced retaining walls have become familiar features in many domestic gardens, where owners seek to improve the functionality of a steep slope.

Within an agricultural context, walls are considered a form of land management intended to control the movement of stock animals. However as was the case for wall construction during the Enclosure period, walls were also used to define ownership. As a result, in addition to controlling animals, walls controlled the movement of people and changed forever the ways in which humans interact with the land (McDonagh and Daniels 2012). Also within an agricultural context, dry-stone walls have been used to create sheep enclosures, which are often found in upland areas where sheep husbandry is common. It is possible for enclosures to be rectangular, circular or oval in shape. The exact forms of vary geographically and according to the requirements of the farmer. They may comprise of a single chamber, or if large flocks of sheep are to be sorted, of several interconnected 'rooms' (BTCV 1986). As with many other walling terms, the names given to the enclosures vary according to region. In Scotland alone, they can be known as 'folds,' 'beilds,' 'stells' or 'fanks' (BTCV 1986). Shooting butts are another example of how the dry-stone wall can be used to serve an alternative purpose. Butts are used to conceal the

shooter from grouse or other types of fowl that they intend to hunt (DSWA 2004a). Though it is rare for new butts to be built (DSWA 2004a), those constructed of dry-stone are considered drier and longer lasting than those constructed of turf and earth (BTCV 1986). They are usually circular in nature, large enough for two people and incorporate a ‘squeeze stile’ preventing livestock from entering (BTCV 1986; DSWA 2004a). Dry-stone shooting butts and sheep enclosures are examples of how the dry-stone technique can be modified to serve a variety of rural purposes. Due to the flexibility of dry-stone, it is likely there are many other variations of such structures in existence throughout Britain.

At a more fundamental level, dry-stone walls assist in the preparation of the land for cultivation. As well as forming useful boundaries, walls were helpful in clearing the ground of stone ahead of agricultural use (Rainsford-Hannay 1957; DSWA 2004a). Therefore, early dry-stone walls often served a dual purpose. However in areas of Britain with an abundance of field-stone, the construction of extremely large, wide walls for the sole purpose of using up the excess stone was common. These structures are known as clearance or consumption walls with examples found in Aberdeenshire (Rainsford-Hannay 1957) and the Lake District (Drake 2008). Figure 4-10 is a photograph of Kingswell Consumption Dyke in Aberdeenshire. Though the wall comprises of an east and west dyke both nonetheless boast impressive dimensions. As noted by Rainsford-Hannay (1957), the west dyke is the grandest, standing at six feet tall, twenty-seven feet wide at the top and approximately 1500 feet in length. The east dyke is smaller, though still significantly larger than a standard dry-stone wall and stands at around six feet in height, seven feet wide and 334 feet long (Rainsford-Hannay 1957).



Figure 4-10: Kingswell Consumption Dyke in Aberdeenshire. From the dimensions provided by Rainsford-Hannay (1957), it is presumed this image is of the west dyke. (Photo by author.)

The functionality of dry-stone walls is further improved by building features into the structure of the wall. Though agricultural or property walls were historically intended to control and restrict the movement of humans and animals, a degree of flexibility was sometimes required. The movement of animals, both livestock and wild, between enclosures was facilitated by small gaps built into the wall. Some walls also incorporate steps or stiles to allow humans to negotiate the wall easily, thus reducing the risk of injuring themselves or loosening the copestones (see Figure 4-11). Features built into the wall are known as ‘field’ or ‘wall furniture’ (BTCV 1986; Laheen 2010). Small openings, permitting the passage of sheep and small wild animals (see Figure 4-12) are known by an assortment of names, presumably in accordance with their geographical origins.

Some authors distinguish between passages for sheep and those for rabbits,¹⁸ which may increase confusion between names and the region from which they came. In Scotland a ‘cundy’ is a passage for sheep, whilst a ‘lunkie’ (presumably a smaller opening) allows for the movement of rabbits (Fenton and Leitch 2011). BTCV (1986) also differentiate rabbit holes and refer to them as ‘smoots’, though it is unclear from where the term originates. Other common, collective terms for openings in agricultural walls are, ‘cripple holes’ (Raistrick 1961; BTCV 1986), ‘lunky’ (BTCV 1986; Ross 2011), ‘hogg holes’, ‘thawks’, ‘thirl holes’, ‘smout holes’, ‘sheep runs’, ‘sheep creeps’ and ‘sheep smoooses’ (BTCV 1986). If built into the wall at the time of construction, such features can be extremely useful to farmers. For example, small gaps allow sheep to be driven through cattle enclosures without the need to open gates (BTCV 1986). Figure 4-12 demonstrates how a gap can be used to facilitate both sheep and cattle grazing.

¹⁸ It is suggested by BTCV (1986) that rabbit passages were so designed to drive rabbits into traps positioned behind the wall gap. In her book, *The Beat of Heart Stones*, Linda Cracknell (2010) also makes reference to this method of rabbit trapping.



Figure 4-11: Dry-stone walls with in-built steps (left) and a squeeze stile (right) to allow people to cross easily. (Photos by author.)



Figure 4-12: A Derbyshire dry-stone wall with a gap to allow animals to pass through. In this example, it appears that the size of the gap would indicate sheep, but not cattle, were able to pass through. (Photo by author.)

The specific style or form of a wall varies throughout Britain. This is often in response to changes in geology, which in turn, necessitate a slightly different technique. Though the double wall is by far the most common style, other unique forms such as the Galloway-dyke and Cornish hedge are worthy of mention on account of their unusual technique. Galloway-dykes, as the name suggests, are from south-west Scotland. The distinguishing feature of Galloway-dykes is the combination of double and single styles of walling (see Figure 4-13).



Figure 4-13: A Galloway-dyke demonstrating the technique of combining single and double style. The smaller stones on the bottom have been built in double style whilst the upper section is built in single. (Photo by author.)

It is said the combination makes best use of the wide shapes and sizes of stone found in the area (Garner 1984; DWSA 2004a). Some stones are small, angular blocks of granite or whinstone, whilst others are large, rounded glacial boulders. Though there is some variation within the style, Galloway-dykes are usually no less than five feet and three inches in height, with their lower half built in double style and the remaining top half in single (Rainsford-Hannay 1957). Contrary to the rules of conventional double walling, when building Galloway-dykes, it is often the smaller stones that are used on the lower levels and the large boulders on top. There are examples of variation showing the lower half of the wall alternating between single and double construction. Figure 4-13 shows a small section of this variation. It is thought this technique was introduced either to use up an abundance of larger boulder stones, or because dykers considered it to produce a stronger wall (DSWA 2004a). The upper level of the dyke makes best use of the rough surface and dense weight of the granite boulders common to the region. Boulders are ‘locked’ together by the combined forces of gravity and friction (DSWA 2004a). It is often the case that daylight shines through the upper portion of the wall, which has the effect of making the structure look unstable. Perhaps unexpectedly, this effect plays a significant role in enclosing livestock. It is said that the ‘tottering’ appearance of the Galloway-dyke deters the unusually athletic black-faced sheep common to the region from attempting to jump or climb the wall (Prevost 1957; Rainsford-Hannay 1957; Garner 1984; BTCV 1986; DSWA 2004a).

Cornish hedges (Figure 4-14) are another example of unique dry-stone work. Instead of having a core of tightly packed stone, a skin of face stones surround a core of subsoil (DSWA 2004a). Cornish hedges are only found in south-west Britain. In Cornwall and Devon, they are known as stone-hedge or stone-banks respectively, while in Wales they are called ‘clawdd’ or ‘cloddiau’ (DSWA 2004a). A typical Cornish hedge stands at approximately 1.5 metres above the ground and often has a top of turf or other vegetation (DSWA 2003). They are also distinctive in that they are the only style of dry-stone walling where it is considered correct to lay stones tilting back into the centre of the wall (Garner 1984). In a technical guide published specifically on Cornish hedges, the DSWA (2003) note that good stone hedging is often based upon inherited skill and therefore is common for wallers unfamiliar with the area to misunderstand the unique techniques of construction.

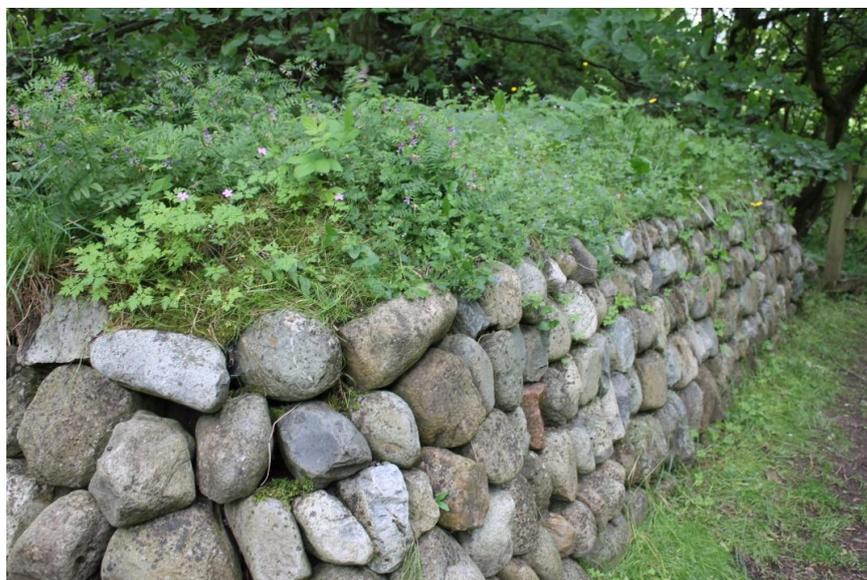


Figure 4-14: A Cornish-hedge. The top is a combination of turf and vegetation and over time, helps to bind the structure together. (Photo by author.)

In addition to these very distinct variations in walling style, it is possible to recognise geographical difference according to a wall’s copingstones. It is common for coping style to vary widely even within a small locality (DSWA 2004a), with some differences based upon the type of stone, whilst others simply personal preference (BTCV 1986). There are too many variations in style to list completely, however the main examples may be flat, tilted (Figure 4-15), vertical (Figure 4-16) and an unusual style called ‘buck and doe’ or ‘cock and hen’ (Figure 4-17) (BTCV 1986). Whatever the style of coping, to maintain continuity with the surrounding area, it is important the craftsman matches the style of coping to the walls in the vicinity.



Figure 4-15: A Cumbrian dry-stone wall with tilted coping. (Photo by author.)



Figure 4-16: A Welsh dry-stone wall with vertical copestones. (Photo by author.)



Figure 4-17: A Cumbrian dry-stone wall with 'buck and doe' (or 'cock and hen') coping. (Photo by author.)

This section has sought to enter into the material heart of the dry-stone craft by making a deliberate attempt to anatomise the wall and historical walling practices. It introduced the fundamental construction techniques associated with dry-stone walling and explained how method and style varies throughout Britain. A distinct regional geography of the dry-stone

wall can be seen to emerge, which combined with the histories of enclosures demonstrate their symbolism and material significance within rural culture. Dry-stone walls might even be thought of as latent-stories, ready to speak of geology, geography and history and the differences which lie within (BTCV 1986). As a foundation for discussions of becoming familiar with walling practice in subsequent chapters, it has also been essential to introduce the basic principles and terminology associated with the craft. In moving away from the material heart of the wall, the following section focuses on the experiences of a dyker working in early 20th century Scotland. It is intended that a social history of the waller will be developed, drawing upon various aspects of walling work, including accommodation, clothing, wages and historical building techniques. This shift in focus aims to provide an enlivened analysis of walling practice by drawing attention to the embodied, emotional and material elements associated with being a waller in the early 20th century.

Historical Wallers and Dykers

This section is concerned with the walling profession as it existed prior to the First World War and aims to provide some insight into the lives of those working as wallers during a time when the construction and rebuilding of agricultural walls was still common-place. Most accounts which follow relate to the early 20th century, owing to the fact that there is very little written about or by wallers prior to this time. Despite this, it is suggested that the extracts provide a degree of insight to the experiences and practices of wallers working during the Enclosure period of the 17th and 18th centuries. The focus falls on Scotland,¹⁹ drawing upon a collection of notes by Robert Cairns, a waller working in the Lothians and Tweeddale regions from 1906 to 1911 (see Figure 4-18).²⁰ His memoir provides unique insights into the hardships associated with being a waller and in so doing, unsettles the romantic image of the lone waller toiling on the hillside, the loss of which many people lament today. Extracts from additional documentary sources and oral histories complement each other in ways that begin to build a foundation for the appreciation of dry-stone walling as a professional trade.

¹⁹ In respect of the geographical variation in terminology and focus on dry-stone walls and practice within Scotland, this section (and indeed much of the chapter) uses the Scottish terms of 'dyke' and 'dyking' interchangeably with the generic terms of walls or walling.

²⁰ After the writers' death, these notes were compiled into a small booklet by his son and published first in 1975 and then in 1986 by Biggar Museum Trust. Cairns R. (1986) *Drystone Dyking*, Biggar Museum Trust.

Robert Cairns: A short biography

Robert Cairns was born in 1887 in the village of Lamancha in the Scottish Borders. He undertook an apprenticeship as a mason and a hewer²¹ in Edinburgh, but lack of work forced him to join his father, who was also trained as a mason, in dry-stone dyking. From 1906 to 1911 they worked together throughout the Lothians and Tweeddale regions. In June of 1911 Robert took up a post as an estate mason and dyker at Stobo Castle estate near Peebles. After serving in the First World War, Cairns returned to Stobo to find that even with the help of an assistant, he had very little time to devote to the repair of the dykes on the estate. He was very troubled by the sight of the deteriorating dykes which served as motivation for him writing his notes on dyking. Robert Cairns died in 1949 aged 62.

Figure 4-18: Biography of dyker Robert Cairns (Adapted from Cairns 1986).

Emergence of the Dry-stone Dyker

Although the skill of building in dry-stone has prehistoric roots firmly within the Stone Age, it has been suggested that modern dry-stone dyke building actually emerged as an off-shoot from masonry (Callander 1982; Aitken 2013, *pers. comm.*).²² Callander (1982) proposes that similar techniques used in masonry and dry-stone remained until builders could rely on the strength of mortar to support walls and buildings. In this respect, it is interesting to note that both Robert Cairns and his father were initially trained as masons prior to becoming full-time dry-stone dykers. A demand for new dykes during the ‘Age of Improvement’ of the 18th century and, as noted by Cairns, the high transport costs associated with delivering lime mortar to remote locations, meant that dyking devolved into a skill far removed from the masonry trade. At a time when agricultural land was being enclosed in the Deeside area of Scotland, dyking became a seasonal job taken on in the summer months by labourers who were also employed in other farming related work during the rest the year (Callander 1982). While this may have been the case for Deeside and other areas of Scotland, it should not be regarded as the only arrangement for dyking employment. As a case in point, Cairns writes about dyking with his father throughout the year, only stopping during the most severe winter weather. Prevost (1957), Callander (1982), Hart (1980) write about dykers taking their families into the hills during the summer months to assist with work:

²¹ A person who cuts and shapes wood or stone.

²² Stone masonry uses mortar to bind individual stones together.

“[Dykes] were built during the summer months, whole families migrating to the moors with tents, food and the minimum of equipment to do the work...The young boys were given the job of packing and the women laboured for the men” (Prevost 1957: 92)

Prevost suggests these family events were common during the late 18th or early 19th centuries, however it is unclear in which regions they might have taken place. Despite a lack of context, the extract provides insight into the gendering of dry-stone work during this time. It appears that women were restricted to the hauling of stones, a menial and more labour-intensive task in comparison to dyke-building. There is also no mention of the roles allocated to young girls. There may of course be justifiable reasons for such division of labour. For example, young children perhaps lacked the physical size and strength to haul stones therefore suggesting this was a task more suited to an adult woman. However to date I have found no historical evidence of women being involved in the construction of dykes, leading me to suspect this was a role reserved for male members of the family.

Accommodation and Lifestyle

Whether the dyker worked over the summer months or all year round, this would often mean staying away from home (with or without family), sometimes for several days or weeks at a time. It has been said that dykers who worked alone may have found accommodation in a variety of places: a farm cottage, bothy or even under a makeshift shelter on the hillside (Callander 1982). Speaking from his own experiences, Cairns is candid about the quality of accommodation a dyker could usually expect to find:

“If he were lucky enough to find lodgings near his work, on the same farm, the ‘room’ or the ‘ben’ usually hadn’t seen a fire for months and, if in winter months, when a fire was put on in the evening the damp increased in volume and the ‘tyke’,²³ usually chaff, was hauled out and put in front of the fire for about an hour, and it was lovely and steamy by the time we were ready for bed” (1986: 5)

These lodgings were not free and in addition to paying rent, dykers were also expected to share rooms with other farm workers such as ploughmen or shepherds. The tone with which Cairns describes sharing lodgings suggests that it was not the most comfortable or enjoyable of situations:

²³ From the context of the extract, it appears that ‘tyke’ refers to a form of mattress.

“Usually it was a ploughman or herd we got digs with, and that meant bed at 8.30pm and up at 5am, breakfast at 6, whether it was daylight or not.” (1986: 5)

“He was a nuisance too, as he was well slept by three in the morning. Then he started to take cramp in his thighs and had to jump about and wakened up [sic] everybody.” (1986: 7)

Although Cairns considered a dyker ‘lucky’ if he was able to find this type of accommodation, it was clearly not without its faults or grievances. He described the majority of his accommodation arrangements as being “next the door bar the dug” (1986: 5), a Scottish term which in this context most likely means being accommodated next to the farm dog; not the most desirable or welcoming place to be housed. In the pecking order of rural social life, the waller was lowly, and this was reflected in the housing, where only the dog was closer to the draughty spot by the door. On the occasions when their accommodation was on the same farm or estate as the dykes they were working on, dykers would often have to walk several miles to reach them:

“We usually had long distances to walk, and it was trying at night to tackle three or four miles over hills after a hard day’s work.” (Cairns 1986: 5)

Walking to and from the dykes greatly cut down the time during which dykers could be working, especially during winter months when daylight hours were short. Callander (1982) suggests that four or five miles was the maximum distance a dyker could afford to walk to a dyke and still build enough wall to earn a decent wage. Perhaps luckier still, was the dyker who was able to find a caravan; or in the words of Cairns, “a hut on iron wheels” (1986: 6) that could be pulled up alongside the dyke. This cut out long walking journeys and if the weather was especially foul, allowed the dykers to shelter and dry out clothes. Despite providing much needed shelter, the “hut on iron wheels” would doubtless be an extremely cold place during winter and to avoid the worst of the weather, men worked on dykes that were lower in the valley and sheltered by trees. Unsurprisingly, poor weather could make a dykers’ working day miserable and tiresome. When the weather turned bad and they had a long walk to reach the dyke, Cairns said he and his father would sit on their “hunkers”²⁴ on the “beildie side of the dyke”²⁵ (1986: 6) until they were stiff, lest they leave and it turned fair again. Clothing was a particular issue for dykers when the weather was poor. In the following section, I reflect on Cairns’ description of clothing and the adaptive practices employed to protect his body during work. Discussions of clothing and

²⁴ “hunkers”, is a Scottish term meaning to sit in a crouching position.

²⁵ “beildie side of the dyke”, the sheltered side of the dyke (Callander 1982: 84)

accompanying impacts of weather establish a rich embodied account of what it means to be a dyker in the early 1900s. In accordance with recent focus on the body within landscape study, these accounts illustrate how humans are intimately linked to the environment and landscape practices through physical experience and bodily sensitivity (Tilley 2004).

Clothing

In contrast to today's highly technical outdoor clothing, dykers in the earlier centuries had no such luxuries. Weather, combined with the harsh nature of dyking work, meant that clothing and boots quickly grew tired and worn. Boots were rarely waterproof, exemplified by Cairns' recollection of always having wet feet when it rained. To save bending over, a dyker would often move stones around with his foot, but suffer the consequence of having scuffed and bashed boots as a result (Callander 1982). Walking several miles each day no doubt took a toll on footwear, but Cairns notes how mice (which presumably shared the dykers' living quarters) were also responsible for the degradation of his boots. As evidenced by the wear of Cairns' boots, traces of repetitive movements and engagement with rough, stony material leaves etches upon a dykers' body and clothing. According to Cairns, the thighs of trouser legs also suffered from repetitive practice as heavy stones were often rolled up the legs before being hefted onto the dyke. Therefore trousers made of moleskin – a heavy kind of cotton – were worn by many dykers since it was a fabric which seemed to endure the longest. The preference to moleskin trousers demonstrates that the dyker was aware of the impact of repetitive practice upon his clothing and as such sought out adaptive practices to limit degradation.

Another example of how a dyker could avoid the abrasive effects of stone is demonstrated in Cairns' account of "rolling up" his hands and fingers with strips of cotton:

"We used new cotton of very good quality cut into strips, broad enough to fit each finger to tie with thread above the first joint of the finger and that was usually well worn all round (we used to twist them round as the wore) and into fragments by dinner time...It had to be the right tension to allow for tightening when it got damp, as it would send you mad if too tight, and fall off if dry, but our fingers developed a deep recess above the first joint, so that it was hardly possible to pull them off."
(1986: 7-8)

Once fingers were well rolled, Cairns could "bash" them against a stone and "never feel a nip" (1986: 8). However, some stones, particularly rough whinstone, could quickly wear down the cotton, demonstrating the differential effects of stone types on the dykers' skin if

it was not protected. In fact, Cairns claimed that it was easy to tell a dyker did not “build damned much dyke” (1986: 7) if their fingers were not rolled up. As evidenced by the ‘deep recesses which developed above the first joint’ from the tying of string, it is clear that practices employed to protect the body were also capable of leaving traces upon the dykers’ hands. Cairns’ claims that he became very quick at wrapping up his fingers; using his teeth and free hand, he took only ten minutes to wrap all eight fingers. Thumbs were left free of the cotton and instead, wrapped with leather that could be easily removed in order to check the tension of guide strings.

It is unclear why Cairns and his contemporaries rolled their fingers instead of using gloves. It is possible that the abrasive qualities of stone and cost of replacing worn out gloves was unaffordable for the dyker, as wages were relatively low. However these makeshift gloves allowed the dykers to work as fast and as efficiently as possible, which was extremely important in terms of earning a respectable wage. Practicality and efficiency were extremely important in dyking. The following extract demonstrates how a cotton apron and bib, amongst other useful functions, assisted in the process of pinning,²⁶ as well as reducing the impact on tools:

“...[a cotton apron was] handy for cleaning hands on if wet or washed. We often gathered small stones off the fields for ‘pinning up’ in the apron too, that saved us breaking them and saved our hammer too. It acted as a belt and on Sundays²⁷ we missed the heat of it, as it was always coiled round our waist.” (Cairns 1986: 8)

As wages were low and the work tiresome, it was essential that energy and time were conserved such that the effort assigned to building was maximised. The following section explains the process by which dykers were paid for their work and were occasionally unfairly treated by landowners and factors, as well as other dykers.

Rates of Pay

From early accounts of dyking in the 17th century and right up until the early 20th century, dykers were usually paid by the ‘piece’, meaning they had to complete a standard length of dyke before they received any payment (Callander 1982). It was generally understood that this would motivate dykers to work at their limit and not stop for anything but the worst of weather. However as Callander suggests, the haste enforced on some dykers meant that stones could be carelessly placed and result in a poorly built dyke. Even with such haste

²⁶ ‘Pinning’ is a dyking technique where large stones are securely ‘pinned’ into place using smaller, angular stones.

²⁷ A dyker did not work on Sundays and would therefore “miss” the support and heat of apron when it was not worn.

and efficiency, piece-work did little to benefit the dykers as they had to work exceptionally hard to earn a decent wage. Cairns (1986) notes how he and his father would work as much as 12-14 hours (not including walking time) during summer months. Payment was usually by the ell or rood; an ell²⁸ being a Scottish measure of 37.6 inches and a rood a length of dyke expected to be built in a day. This was seven yards in limestone areas, where the stone is lighter and easier to manoeuvre than in the granite areas where only six yards were expected (Callander 1982). Occasionally, food was included as part-payment, but was usually only oatmeal. A newspaper extract written in 1984 about an eighteenth century dyker makes reference to payment of:

“Fourteen shillings Scots for each ell and one boll of meal for each thirty-six said ells” (Dixon 1984: 6)

According to the Dictionary of the Scots Language²⁹ (2004), a “boll of meal”³⁰ is a dry measure of oatmeal totalling approximately 140lbs. Callander (1982) noted that if such victuals were provided, it could reduce the dyker’s cash payment by up to a half, or even a third. As part of an account of his grandfathers’ life as a dyker, a gentleman from St John’s Town of Dalry in Dumfries and Galloway, told me how his grandfather would lay out a portion of oatmeal along the length of dyke he was working on and when he reached it, he would use water from a nearby burn³¹ to make it into brose.³² Throughout his notes, Cairns reveals very little about the availability or type of food he and his father ate during their dyking days. However he mentions that included in the rent for some lodgings, the landlady would prepare meals with the food which he and his father had bought. Although not necessarily representative of the greater population of dykers, these accounts suggest that for a dyker, availability and choice of food, combined with a modest wage, was rather poor.

²⁸ Callander (1982) indicates that in Scotland, the ell was used in preference to the 36 inch yard until the middle of the 19th Century.

²⁹ The Dictionary of the Scots Language (DSL) is a comprehensive online source comprising of electronic editions of the two major historical dictionaries of the Scots language: 1) The *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue (DOST)*, containing information about words in use from the 12th to end of the 17th Centuries, and 2) The *Scottish National Dictionary (SND)* which contains information about Scots words in use from the eighteenth century to the present day.

³⁰ DSL-SND1, Boll *n.* In gen. use in agricultural circles. [bɔl, bɔu] **I. Boll.** **1.** A dry measure, varying in extent according to locality, and the article measured. A boll of oats, barley, or potatoes contains about 6 imperial bushels; a boll of meal amounts to 140 lb. avoirdupois.

³¹ A ‘burn’ is a Scottish word for a stream.

³² DSL - SND1 BROSE, Broas, *n.* and *v.* **1. n.** Now gen. known in Eng. but with varying significance.

(1) A dish made by mixing boiling water or milk with oatmeal or peasemeal, and adding salt and butter. The mixture may be only roughly stirred up so as to leave lumps. Oatmeal brose had sometimes the addition of the skimmed fat of soup.

There were also other downsides to the dyking economy. As a result of being paid by the ‘piece’, dykers sometimes had to wait until the entire job was completed before receiving payment. Cairns recalls this as being a “snag” that was especially tough for young men who were as yet unfamiliar to the other tradesmen and therefore could not run accounts with them (1986: 6). However he claims that some factors³³ were more considerate than others and when they visited to check the progress of the dyke, might bring along some cash to tide the dykers over until such time as the work was completed. Once the dyker was finished, in order to determine whether the contracted length of dyke had actually been completed, the factor would once again visit and take a measurement. This was done by using either a map, a chain or, in later years, a tape measure (Callander 1982). For Cairns, the favoured method was by chain as it “sank into all the hollows of the ground” (1986: 9) and therefore increased the length for which the dyker would be paid. When a tape was used in later years, it could cost dykers a few pounds if it was pulled tight by an unforgiving factor, a practice with which Cairns was quite familiar. However, it seems that when faced with such an event, some dykers were determined to get their own back. Cairns recalls how some of “the tough old ‘uns” would covertly roll the tape around their fist a few times to increase the measurement and therefore earn more money (1986: 9). This is not the only example that Cairns provides of dykers’ resisting the unfair treatment by factors or landowners. Although he does not implicate himself, his father or any of his dyking friends, he outlines how a labourer might feel compelled to do if he believed he was suffering an injustice:

“But there were times when their work was interfered with, either by rival dykers, or if the wiley [sic] farmer had found a reason or excuse for not paying the full amount of account, or managed to ‘deduct’ a very large discount – for instance, catching the dykers poaching (supposedly) or not [building the dyke] high enough (sheep would jump). Then the dyker, or rather a friend or accomplice, would ‘ramfeezle’ it.³⁴ This was done by using a short lever...and levering a stone forward about an inch here and there – every three or four foot would do – near the bottom [of the dyke] on both sides. That dyke was doomed to a life of ten years or thereby, depending on the

³³ DSL - SND1 FACTOR, *n.*, *v.* Sc. usages. **I. n. 1.** An agent or steward who manages land or house property for its proprietor; one who has charge of the administration of an estate.

³⁴ DSL - SND1 RAMFEEZLE, *v.* Also *ramfeezal*; with alternative second element, *ramfoozle*; *rampoozle* (Watson). [rəm'fi:zəl; Per., Fif. '-fuzəl; Abd., Fif. '-puzəl] **1.** To disarrange, muddle.

stock. It would just bulge at the ribs and gradually turn into the shape of a tattie pit,³⁵ or sheep would simply walk over it” (1986: 10-11)

Despite this slightly ‘rebellious’ account, Cairns maintains that the majority of dykers known to him were conscientious workers who would never pass a bad job through their hands. He gives extensive descriptions of several dykers who, on occasion, he and his father had cause to work alongside. As well as tendering for jobs as a working pair, Cairns and his father occasionally worked as part of a gang of dykers, which involved one person taking on a large job and sub-contracting the work to individual dykers. On the occasions that Cairns mentions such work, he does not appear to be particularly fond of it, chiefly because the ‘main’ dyker who accepted the contract often paid the gang members significantly less per yard or rood than he received himself:

“I didn’t care a great deal for him myself, as he was very fond of taking big jobs at a good price and sub-letting them at as much as 3d a yard less” (1986:17)

To put this wage into context, according to Callander (1982) the going rate for a dyker in the early 20th century (around the time that Cairns and his father worked) was approximately 1/3 to 1/6 per yard.³⁶ In comparison to the rate of pay that Cairns quotes in his notes, Callander’s estimation seems to be rather high. In the extract below, Cairns offers another example of unequal rates of pay amongst gangs, as well as indicates his rate of pay. In this case, he was paid 8d (8 pence) per yard, a full 7 pence less than the going rate as suggested by Callander.

“Old Dick Fullerton, the local dyker had the contract of the whole farm (a lot of work) and he had Old Tom, the Flemings and my father and I, and we were putting up about 50 yards a day total, and he put up about 3 himself, and he had 2d a yard up his sleeve (he charged 10d I found out later, we had 8d a yard), so he pocketed 8/4 a day out of us, and had his own mighty 2/6 for three yards, so you’ll find he was doing quite well. That’s how to make money” (1986: 7)

It is of course unlikely that rates of pay for dyking were geographically comparable; Callander’s figures are mostly based in the Deeside region, whilst Cairns’ are in reference to Central and Southern Scotland. It is possible that rates varied according to the dyke specification put forth by the factor or landowner, for example, the height or width of a dyke could differ according to purpose or availability of stone. From the accounts

³⁵ A “tattie” is a Scottish word for potato, meaning “tattie pit” could be approximately translated as a potato pile.

³⁶ 1/3 = 1 shilling and 3 pence; 12 (12d) pence per shilling.

provided by Cairns and Callander, it is nonetheless evident that as a group, dykers were not well paid. As a result of being paid by the ‘piece’ and sometimes in victuals of oatmeal, dykers were required to work extremely efficiently over long hours to earn a reasonable wage. To further compound these poor working conditions, dykers were also at risk of being unfairly treated and underpaid by factors, landowners and other dykers. As such, and as mentioned previously, in order to maximise financial rewards dykers became extremely skilled at working efficiently. The following section reflects on some of the building techniques and practices employed by dykers to ensure work progressed as quickly as possible.

Building Techniques

As noted by Cairns, one method of increasing efficiency was to work in pairs, with a person at either side of the dyke. In the following extract, Cairns explains how he and his father regularly worked together and could keep the dyke level and increase height much faster than a person working alone:

“A man himself has a lot of jumping over to do and that means a halt, and he is inclined to go too high with his outside (greed) and neglect his packing, whereas the pair pack across each other, or should and keep a constant ready bed [sic], thereby tying the tail of every stone laid on the outside, so that they ‘get them off their haund’³⁷ easier, and all this makes for speed” (1986: 13)

In this quote Cairns candidly implies how the lone dyker, by way of eagerness to finish, may neglect some of the packing that can be a time-consuming process.³⁸ Packing is an extremely important stage in dyke-building which ensures the ‘tail’ of each outside stone is secured, and also provides a stable platform onto which another row of stones can be built. By working as a pair across the dyke, Cairns and his father were able to share the packing and thus make quicker progress than a solo dyker. In addition, Cairns notes how the lone dyker must be able to work “both hands” (1986: 13), meaning on one side of the dyke, he must orientate the right-hand side of his body to the direction of progress, and conversely, when working on the other side of the dyke, position the left-hand side of his body to the direction of progress. Owing to the variation of being right-handed or left-handed, most dykers find it easier, in terms of precision and speed, to work one way or the other and if working as a pair as Cairns did (he favoured right-side to the direction of progress), could capitalise on this efficiency and preferred way of working. Of course, this system was

³⁷ ‘Haund’ is a Scottish term for hand.

³⁸ Also known as hearting or filling and is the process of tightly filling the middle of the two sides of the dyke with smaller stones to ensure larger outside stones do not fall inwards.

only successful if your partner was also working on his preferred side, or was sufficiently competent on both sides, as Cairns claimed his father to be. Callander (1982) also suggests that a preferred side could be developed through experience and practice, such as working opposite someone who already had a favoured way of working. As fathers often worked with sons, the preferred direction of work tended to alternate between the generations; for example, a son working on the opposite side of the dyke from his father will learn the opposite way of working and as a result of extensive practice, will develop this ‘hand’ much more than the other (Callander 1982). Examination of these micro-practices and cross-generational adaptations, not only characterise the dyker as an efficient worker, but also highlight the embodied nature of dyking practice. As such, it draws attention to the performative nature of landscape, and aligns dyking as an embodied practice through which the world is made meaningful. This approach is in line with a shift in recent cultural geography studies from representations of landscape to the process of *landscaping* (Wylie 2007). Conceptualised thus, attention is placed on the “embodied acts of landscaping” (Lorimer 2005: 85) of which dry-stone dyking is an example. Wylie notes that it is through such embodied acts that “self, landscape and culture itself inhere, circulate and emerge” (2007: 166), further illustrating how humans are constitutive of, and participant within the world and its’ (re)creation.

A great proportion of the dyking work in which Cairns and his father were employed takes on a more literal meaning of the word re-creation. Cairns notes how they spent much of their time rebuilding and repairing existing dykes, and as such they often had to “red oot”³⁹ (1986: 5) a length of wall at the start of each day. This was often a twenty-yard length and, as Cairns estimated there to be approximately one ton in every yard, he and his father would have to handle approximately twenty tons per day. Similarly, if a new stretch of dyke was to be built, the dykers would be required to gather a lot of stone and transport it to the site. According to Rainsford-Hannay (1957), much of the stone used for dykes was quarried from rocky outcrops close to the site. From here the stones were transferred onto a ‘slipe’⁴⁰ and carted by a horse to the dyke. These small quarries can still be seen on Scottish hillsides today and are further evidence of the legacy of dyking etched within the landscape. Due to the heavy nature of transporting stone and in the absence of a horse and sledge, dykers would never carry stones uphill to the dyke, but instead roll them downhill (Rainsford-Hannay 1957). Considering the incredible weight of stone handled daily by a dyker, it is of little surprise that some suffered physically. Cairns described a dyking

³⁹ “redd oot”, a Scottish term meaning to clear out, or in this context, clear away the existing dyke.

⁴⁰ A ‘slipe’ is also known as a sledge (Cairns 1986: 8)

friend as someone who walked “half shut, bent from the hips with constant stooping”⁴¹ (1986: 7), demonstrating physical legacy dyking work can leave on the muscles and body.

When building a new dyke or repairing an older one, in order to ensure efficiency of time and effort, the dykers would arrange all stones according to their purpose and position them only a few steps from the dyke on both sides (Rainsford-Hannay 1957). Cairns (1986) recalls arranging stones in such a way when ‘redding oot’ a stretch of wall and in particular, setting aside coping stones to ensure these were not used elsewhere in the construction. Very few tools were used; a shovel for digging the foundations, a hammer for shaping stones, strings to make sure the outside stones were in line and occasionally, wooden batter frames (Figure 4-19).

Rainsford-Hannay (1957) was of the opinion that for the rebuilding or repairing of gaps, professional dykers seldom used the wooden frames and instead relied on the string stretched between the two sound portions of dyke and a trained eye, to keep them in line. Whilst specific techniques no doubt varied between individuals and geographically according to stone type, this assumption was certainly true for Cairns and his father, as it was indicated they only used a frame when building a new dyke.



Figure 4-19 has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Figure 4-19: Wooden batter frame with gauge line that can be adjusted as the wall is built (Figure removed due to Copyright restrictions.)

This section began by detailing the emergence of dry-stone dyking as an off-shoot to masonry work and progressed, by way of using notes from dyker Robert Cairns, into an account of what it meant to labour as a dyker in the early 20th century. Through Cairns’ recollections of working life and other documentary material, I have sought to question and trouble the romantic image of the lone dyker on the hillside. In reality, working days were extremely long, physically exhausting, with little financial remuneration to reflect the

⁴¹ As a result of constant stooping, the dyker walked with a permanent crook in his hips.

effort involved. In focussing on the embodied practice of dyking, as opposed to the physical manifestation of walls, this section has also sought to conceptualise dry-stone dyking as an act of landscape performance, through which self, landscape and culture are created, circulated and experienced (Wylie 2007).

Since Cairns' time, the dry-stone walling trade and craft has changed considerably. Working conditions and pay have improved, with better prospects for training and career development. Much of this change has been encouraged by the establishment of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain in 1968, an organisation that continues to support the development of the craft, as well as provide training and examinations to ensure the skill survives into the future. Acting as a formal introduction to the DSWA, the following section outlines the humble beginnings of the organisation and examines the ways in which its activities and agendas have encouraged the development of new walling cultures.

The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain

British dry-stone walling culture cannot be fully understood without reference to the DSWA and its predecessor, the Stewartry Drystone Dyking Committee. To provide insight to the origins and development of both organisations, this section draws upon widespread and extensive historical and contemporary documentary material. Such materials were primarily sourced from the DSWA organisational archive located in Cumbria and consist of meeting minutes, records of demonstrations and competitions, back issues of *The Waller and Dyker* magazine, as well as a range of other documents.

Since its establishment in 1968, the Association has worked to encourage and support the walling craft by providing training and education opportunities for its various members. The formation of a professional certification scheme has also sought to standardise the levels of craftsmanship, encouraging both hobbyists and professionals to work towards the attainment of these certificates. This section explains the history and development of the Association from its establishment to the present day. It is demonstrated how their approach to safeguarding the craft is tightly woven with a commitment to training and education across a range of social groups.

The DSWA is a registered charitable organisation and presently employs two staff, based at the main office near Crooklands in Cumbria. It relies on membership subscriptions for much of its income and welcomes professional, hobbyist, junior and corporate members. There are currently nineteen branches of the DSWA throughout Britain, each organising a

variety of activities including training courses, demonstrations and competitions. At a DSWA Trustee Board meeting on 7th December 2013, it was noted that there were a total of 1094 registered members. Of this number, 780 were registered as open members (which may include those with or without a practical interest in walling); 282 professional members; 24 corporate members and 8 junior members. Overseas membership is also possible at a slightly higher cost. Members are provided with the quarterly newsletter, *The Waller and Dyker*, have access to branch activities and may attend the annual DSWA member's social event. Affiliates with professional aspirations can also work towards accredited qualifications, run in conjunction with Lantra Awards, a nationally recognised awarding organisation. The following section uses literature sourced from the DSWA to trace the development of the organisation from its foundations to the present day. In doing so, it describes the Association as an accidental and designed organisation that during its existence, had to be responsive to the changing ways in which funds and support could be accessed.

Origins, Objectives and Branch Development

Prior to the establishment of the DSWA, matters relating to walling and dyking in Britain were dealt with by The Stewartry Drystane Dyking Committee at Cally Estate, Gatehouse-of-Fleet in Dumfries and Galloway. The Stewartry Committee was formed in the late 1930s as a result of concern over dyking as a skill that was in danger of being lost.⁴² The establishment of the Committee was the first in a series of events which saw dry-stone dyking and walling recognised as a worthy skill and craft. The Committee brought together individuals with a shared passion for ensuring the dyking tradition survived. The location of the Committee in the Stewartry of Dumfries and Galloway is significant for as described earlier in the chapter, the south-west of Scotland has a strong dyking heritage. Until his death in 1961, Colonel F. Rainsford-Hannay, author of *Dry-stone Walling* (1957), acted as convenor of the Committee, proposing the establishment of the very first dyking competition at Gatehouse-of-Fleet in 1939. In 1961, Mrs Murray-Usher, owner of Cally Estate, succeeded Rainsford-Hannay as convenor and continued to organise dyking competitions in the Stewartry approximately every two years (Hannay 2010). However, at this time competitor numbers began to dwindle. Recognising that the historical homeland of Scottish dyking was at risk of becoming provincial and isolated, in 1963 an attempt was made to maintain the competitions by widening their range to take in the northern counties

⁴² See Chapter 5: 'Contemporary Walling and Dyking' (p. 154) for more detail on why dyking was considered a skill in danger of being lost.

of England. Competitor numbers increased as a result, with wallers travelling from Cumbria and Yorkshire to compete at Gatehouse-of-Fleet (Audland 1993).

In the years following, media and public interest from across Britain further strengthened and consolidated the aims of the Stewartry Committee. In response to such interest and enthusiasm, it was decided in late 1967 that a Dry Stone Walling Association be created (Audland 1993). It was made clear by Mrs Murray-Usher that the responsibilities of the new Association would be far greater than those of the Stewartry. Despite the admirable enthusiasm and dedication of the individuals who had established the Stewartry Committee, it is unlikely they could have foreseen the development of the craft in only a few decades. The DSWA, in recognition of the geographical diversity of walling, would therefore cover the whole of Britain and be open to anyone interested in the craft. In order to sustain this young organisation, membership fees were charged and in the interest of building a supportive community, employment opportunities and dates of competitions were shared amongst members (Audland 1993).

In the subsequent months, the DSWA was set-up as a sub-committee of the Stewartry Committee with Miss Elizabeth Audland serving as Honorary Secretary of both (Audland 1993). During the early 1970s, public interest in walling and dyking continued to grow. In England and Scotland, demonstrations, competitions and training events continued to be organised by the Stewartry Committee. At this stage, the DSWA and Stewartry were mutually-supportive organisations, both with the same objectives of promoting and developing the dry-stone community. It is here when a distinct regionality of the DSWA begins to take shape: in respect of the unique style of dyking found in the south-west, the Stewartry continued to operate whilst the DSWA acted as a connecting body which both acknowledged and drew together the various walling regions. The establishment of the DSWA also assisted in the generation of government funding from the then Countryside Commission for Scotland, which supported some of the Stewartry events (Audland 1993).

By 1977, Miss Audland had resigned as Honorary Secretary of the Stewartry Committee but remained, on a temporary and part-time basis, as secretary of the DSWA (Audland 1993). At this point, focus shifted from the Stewartry Committee to the DSWA sub-committee. It is noted in the Waller and Dyker Bulletin of 1978 that the DSWA was kept extremely busy with various enquiries and would require restructuring in order to preserve continuity. As a result of this developing interest, the DSWA took more steps towards increasing formalisation and governance. Indeed, only one year later, a Working Party comprising four members of the Stewartry Committee and Miss Audland of the DSWA,

was formed (Audland 1993). Over the forthcoming months, the Working Party produced an official Constitution for the DSWA to ensure its future as an organisation. What was once a provincial, informal group of individuals with a shared interest in preserving the walling craft in their area had now become a national organisation.

In the years that followed, the DSWA worked towards establishing an important profile for the craft, such that increased financial support could be sourced. The first step towards this goal was the appointment of a part-time secretary to replace Miss Audland. To fund the role, in 1980 a successful joint application was made to the Countryside Commission for England and Wales and the Countryside Commission for Scotland. It was agreed that the Countryside Commission for England and Wales and Countryside Commission for Scotland would jointly provide a grant of £5000 to fund a part-time post for three years (Audland 1993). In September 1980, Mr Lawrence Garner, a dry-stone waller and former schoolteacher, was appointed to the position and relocated the DSWA 'office' to his home in Oswestry, Shropshire. In addition to dealing with the everyday duties of running the DSWA, it was intended that Garner would assist in the campaign to create walling apprenticeships (Waller and Dyker Bulletin 1981a). The establishment of apprenticeships marked a notable change in approach of safeguarding the craft. Despite high attendance at competitions and significant interest in the craft, there was growing concern over the increasing age of the working professionals (Lean 1980). The continuity of skill through the generations is essential for the survival of any craft. As recognised by Henley in *The Guardian*, this remains a problem for many heritage crafts:

“Modern Britain, it seems, is not much fussed about the skills and knowledge that exist only in the minds, eyes and hands of people who make things – our living vernacular heritage. We like them, in a rose-tinted nostalgic kind of way, but we don't do much to support them.” (Henley 2010: n.p.n.)

In order to support the intangible skills and knowledge of what Henley speaks, it is necessary to formalise and create opportunities for training. In the early 1980s, the decision of the DSWA to create an apprenticeship scheme demonstrates this approach to formalising training. With financial support from the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (CoSIRA), the DSWA was able to fund six two-year apprenticeships (Waller and Dyker Bulletin 1981b). In another attempt to formalise the skills of walling, at around the same time, a DSWA Craftsman Certification Scheme and Professional Register of wallers and dykers began. Professional members were required to pay a fee of £10 per annum,

which included having their name published on the register. Non-professional members were still welcome to join at a reduced fee of £5 (Waller and Dyker Bulletin 1981c).

The actions of the DSWA thus far highlight attention paid to improving the continuity of craft skill and professional status. The establishment of the Craftsman Certification Scheme and Professional Register (both of which remain in place today) were key advances in the public profile of the craft. Not only did they draw attention to the 'endangered' nature of the craft, but they also marketed walling as a rare and valuable skill. Indeed by 1982, the DSWA became aware that in addition to professional walling, a new kind of interest was also beginning to develop. Inquiries from 'do-it-yourself' wallers were on the increase. In response to unprecedented levels of interest it was decided that a series of two-day courses for amateurs would be introduced in Scotland and England (Waller and Dyker Bulletin 1982). However the addition of such courses were not well received by all members of the DSWA. Some professionals were worried that individuals with career aspirations would also participate in the courses, and as a result, gain only a basic, amateur understanding of the craft, inadequate for professional employment (Waller and Dyker Bulletin 1983). It does not seem that they were concerned with the training of DIY enthusiasts who perhaps wished to improve a wall around their garden, but with those who would assume they possessed a sound knowledge of the craft and establish themselves as professionals. In spring 1983, an official Association bulletin noted that to register their objection to the two-day courses, some well-known members from the south of Scotland had resigned from the DSWA. Such an event reveals the concerns of professionals over the quality of walling work being done under the auspices of DSWA. In light of the respect afforded by the introduction of the Professional Register, these experienced members may well have felt that such professional acknowledgement was in danger of being threatened.

It is unknown whether this issue was resolved and the departed professionals rejoined as members, but only a few months later, the DSWA found itself facing more pressing concerns. Winter 1983 marked the end of the part-time Organiser position joint funded by the Country Commission for England and Wales and the Country Commission for Scotland. It was hoped that Garners' position would be maintained by membership fees and the sourcing of additional grants, but this was not possible (Audland 1993). Despite the unprecedented interest from amateurs, this event demonstrates the vulnerability of the DSWA. Indeed the challenge of sourcing a sustainable income is familiar to many small organisations throughout Britain. Groups depending upon membership fees and funding must be responsive to the ways in which funds can be sourced. The end of Garner's

position may have threatened the existence of the Association if it were not for the fortunate partnership with the National Federation of Young Farmer's Clubs. Secretary duties of the DSWA were transferred to the head office of the Young Farmer's in Stoneleigh, Warwickshire and would remain there into the new Millennium (Audland 1993).

By the mid-1980s, several regional branches had been established throughout the country: South of Scotland, Cumbria, Derbyshire, West Yorkshire, North Wales and Lancashire (Audland 1993). In a tradition established by the Stewartry Committee, the regionality of the Association thus continued to expand and develop. In a DSWA newsletter dated 1983, it was noted that the strength of the Association was in its branches, and as remains the convention today, requested that branches provide regular updates of their activities. Currently there are nineteen branches throughout Britain, all of which elect their own committees and have control over their own finances. Branches often comprise a combination of hobbyists, part-time and full-time professionals who organise training courses, demonstrations, competitions and other events. Owing to the diverse geology of the British Isles, walling is geographically nuanced and distinct. Different skills are required in working with different types of stone, and it is these differences where the strength and appeal of the craft lies. A good professional waller recognises the strengths and weaknesses afforded by different stone types, appreciating them for their individuality and flexibility. The very existence of nineteen DSWA branches acknowledges and embraces the geographical variations of the walling craft.

Since 2004, DSWA activities have been organised from a custom-built head-office at Westmorland County Showground in Cumbria. The Association employs two paid members of staff and has established a variety of links with international walling communities. In the years since its birth and indeed, the creation of its predecessor the Stewartry Drystone Dyking Committee, the DSWA has navigated through many obstacles, often having to be opportunistic in the ways in which income has been generated. It is supported by a range of individuals, from hobbyist to professionals, maintaining a distinct regional identity from which it derives a large portion of its strength. The formalisation and standardisation of walling skill through the establishment of a Professional Register and Craftsman Certification Scheme goes some way to ensuring the craft endures through the generations. The following section explains the Association's approach to training and education in more detail and also serves as helpful context for subsequent empirical discussions.

Training and Education

The Certification scheme is the main method by which the DSWA works to encourage consistency and continuity of professional walling and dyking skills. The scheme is a series of progressive practical tests designed to ensure full-time and part-time professionals achieve and maintain the highest standards of craftsmanship (DSWA 2014a). Within the scheme there are four levels of qualification available. Using documentary material from the DSWA, Figure 4-20 outlines and explains the components of each level of qualification.

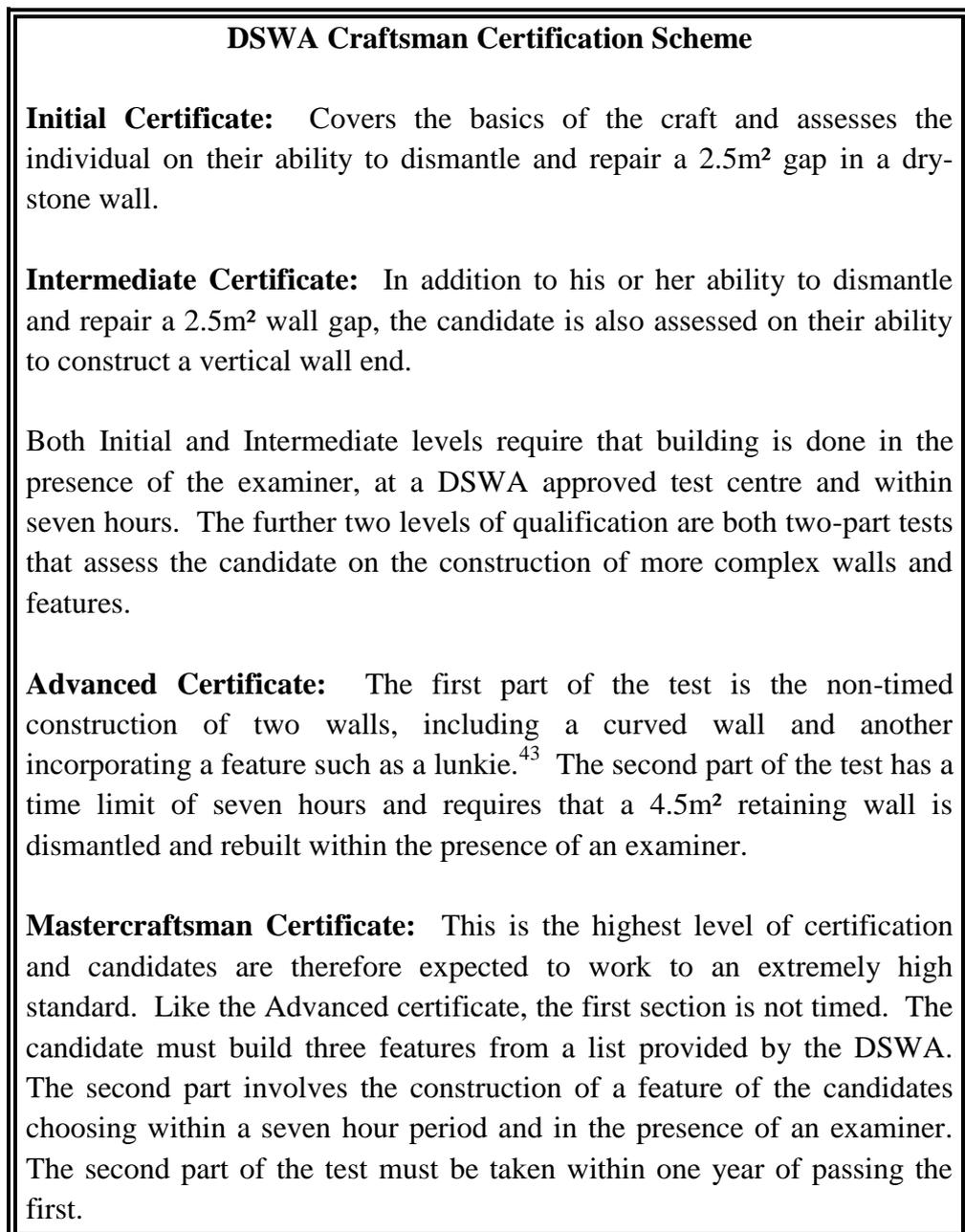


Figure 4-20: Outline of the four stages of the DSWA Craftsman Certification Scheme.

Adapted from DSWA documents and DSWA (2004a: 90-91)

⁴³ A lunkie (or lunky) is a passage way built into an agricultural wall which allows for the movement of animals between neighbouring enclosures (Hart 1980).

In 2004, the Association gained accreditation from Lantra, a British qualifications authority, for the first three levels of certification. Accreditation further standardises dry-stone skill and allows training providers to seek additional government funding for the provision of the courses (DSWA 2004a). In England, several colleges offer course options for Initial and Intermediate certificates and are eligible for funding assistance from the 24+ Advanced Learning Loan. One institution where dry-stone walling courses are particularly popular is at the Derbyshire Eco Centre. Established in 2010, the Eco Centre is funded by Derbyshire County Council and provides a selection of activities and courses based upon sustainable construction and development. Dry-stone walling courses equivalent to the Initial, Intermediate and Advanced qualifications are offered regularly throughout the year. Course fees are inclusive of tuition, some materials and examination costs. Deductions are available to some individuals such as those who receive income-based benefits. Lantra also offers dry-stone walling as a specialist pathway within the Environmental Conservation Apprenticeship scheme, which in conjunction with a training provider and sponsor, allows trainees aged 16-24 to become qualified up to Intermediate level. However, as was noted by the Training and Education coordinator in an edition of *The Waller and Dyker* magazine, there are a number of obstacles in the apprenticeship route (Clarkson 2012). The apprenticeship scheme is dependent upon a training provider, such as a college, to provide support, assessment and evaluation of progress. Although there has been some interest from colleges, the DSWA hopes that an institution with the ability to roll out the scheme nationally will come forward. Furthermore, apprentices must be trained by a professional waller. This is complicated by the fact that such professionals must possess at least an Advanced level certificate, the numbers of which are currently low. Concern over the small numbers of people earning or working towards Advanced qualifications was noted in the 7th December 2013 DSWA Trustee Board Minutes. Difficulties with the apprenticeship scheme do not end here. There are also cost implications for the professional. The apprentice is required to be registered as an employee, making the employer subject to employment law and expected to provide the apprentice with thirty hours of training or work per week. In acknowledging these difficulties, the Training and Education Coordinator has suggested that a mentoring scheme may act as an alternative (Clarkson 2012). As well as training those new to the profession, it was implied that such a scheme would also assist wallers at all levels of experience and in particular, help individuals to make the transition to Advanced and Master Craftsman levels. The scheme is still being considered by the DSWA, and would require significant funding if it were to be successfully implemented.

In the past, examination costs were covered by the DSWA, but in order to increase income and meet organisational costs, examination fees were introduced in 1986. Occasionally however, the DSWA has been successful in acquiring additional sources of funding to help provide opportunities and support for wallers wishing to develop their skills. In January 2014 the organisation was awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund in order to enhance the craft and improve career prospects in the north-west of England (HLF 2015). The Built Landscape Heritage Education and Training Project is intended to fund five training bursaries, help established wallers enhance their skills and also provide an educational programme for schools and colleges (HLF 2015).⁴⁴ The acquisition of such funds has been greatly assisted by the recent appointment of a DSWA Training and Education Coordinator. The position itself was made possible by a grant from The Prince's Countryside Fund in late 2011 (The Prince's Countryside Fund 2014). The appointment of the coordinator further demonstrates the dedication of the DSWA to develop the knowledge and expertise of those involved in the craft. The Training and Education Coordinator also assists in the sourcing of opportunities and additional funding for education. A notable example is the Leonardo Project. The project has been funded by the Leonardo Partnership Programme, a sub-component of the European Lifelong Learning Programme. The main aim of the project is to encourage younger people to take up walling as a career, thus ensuring craft skills are retained and passed on to subsequent generations (DSWA 2012). In partnership with groups from France, Italy and Spain, it is intended that the exchange of expertise and training techniques will assist the development of the walling profession. In the case of Italy and Spain, it is also hoped that the project will result in the establishment of walling qualifications, much like those provided by the DSWA and the French organisation, Artisans Bâisseurs en Pierres Sèches (DSWA 2012).⁴⁵ The project ran from 2012 to 2014 with visits in each of the participating countries throughout this time. Opportunities were available for small groups of both qualified mastercraftsman instructors and trainees wishing to further their dry-stone education, with travel and subsistence expenses covered by the project funds. In order to provide opportunities to as many people as possible, it was intended that different people would take part in each of the different visits. In the case of British participants, the DSWA required that both instructors and trainees met various criteria, including a commitment to "progressing a career in dry-stone walling" (DSWA 2012: 14). For the

⁴⁴ The Built Landscape Heritage Education and Training Project was awarded first-round funding by HLF in recognition of the potential of the project to deliver high-quality outcomes. Additionally, the DSWA were awarded £8300 of Development Funding to help progress plans towards application for a full HLF grant (HLF 2015). On 22nd of May 2015, the DSWA was successful in their bid, receiving a full HLF grant of £220,400 for the Built Landscape Heritage Education and Training Project (DSWA 2015).

⁴⁵ In English this translates as Dry-stone Artisans.

trainee participants, in demonstration of their commitment, it was required that they work towards the Advanced or Mastercraftsman certificates at the time of application. This request may also indicate a method by which the DSWA aim to redress the small numbers of individuals working towards, and gaining, the higher qualifications.

In terms of accessibility, walling qualifications are generally available to a wide range of people, from various social backgrounds and locations. Indeed, only recently, a nineteen year old female waller was recognised as the youngest ever to attain the Advanced level certificate. Although this is a great achievement for a young woman waller, it must also be noted that there are very few women currently recorded on the professional register. Of the professionals registered in England, Wales and Scotland, only 6% of those are women. Currently there is only one registered female waller to have achieved the mastercraftsman [sic] award. Though walling clearly remains a male dominated profession, these figures are slightly misleading in terms of wider female participation with the DSWA. As a result of having attended several DSWA events and spoken with members, it was clear that many women have, and continue to play a strong role in the organisation of the association. According to the DSWA Trustee Board Meeting of 7th December 2013, 19% of DSWA Trustee and Branch Board Members were women. Indeed the association itself was founded and extensively supported through its primary years by a woman. In the years since the DSWA was organised by Mrs Murray-Usher, many other women have played significant roles, including but not limited to, administrative and secretarial work as well as the editing and production of *The Waller and Dyker* magazine. Furthermore, since the securing of funding for the position of Training and Education Coordinator, both individuals to take on the role have been female. As a result of attending DSWA branch events, it was also noted that many women were dedicated to pursuing walling as a hobby. Though there still remains much to be done to encourage women into the profession, in terms of the overall structure and objectives of the DSWA, women play an important role in safeguarding the craft for the future.

This section has focussed upon the origins and development of the DSWA of Great Britain and its role in walling culture. The establishment of branches recognise the geographic diversity of British walls and are one of the main ways in which people become familiar with the craft. The formation of the Craftsman Certification Scheme in the 1980s sought to standardise the education of professionals and so improve the quality of walling work. Various opportunities for skill development and the appointment of a Training and Education Coordinator further demonstrate the dedication of the DSWA to the improvement of knowledge and expertise. As a result, the DSWA has substantially

improved the social and cultural diversity of those involved in dry-stone activities. Though the attainment of DSWA qualifications is generally straightforward and accessible to a wide range of people, it has been noted much is yet to be done to encourage women into the profession. In the following section attention turns to examples of walling outside and beyond the DSWA. This includes professionals and organisations in Britain who have limited or no involvement with the Association.

Beyond the Dry Stone Walling Association

Though it has been shown that the DSWA has contributed significantly to the uptake of walling practice in Britain, it is important to note that British walling culture is not entirely founded upon the DSWA. To work as a professional waller in Britain it is not necessary to join the DSWA or gain any of their qualifications. This is also the case for those interested in walling from an amateur or hobbyist perspective.

Though this thesis pays most attention to individuals and organisations associated with the DSWA, it is important to recognise individuals who are not members. Only a waller with qualifications can be listed on the DSWA Professional Register. This register is primarily used as a way to advertise services and distinguish between different levels of experience. As it is compiled by the DSWA and is testament to their efforts to standardise the craft, it would be inappropriate to advertise the services of a waller who has not followed the DSWA route of becoming professional. This does not mean to say that the DSWA does not regard them as a competent craftsman, but without a frame of reference for their new skills and experience, the organisation cannot comment on their professional competence. Indeed, it appears that the DSWA is respectful of open members who practice professionally. For example, in early 2013 it was decided by DSWA online forum administrators that only registered members of the DSWA would be able to advertise their service on the forum. However it was not necessary for individuals to be registered as professionals; an open membership was declared sufficient (Forum Administrator 2012). This situation shows that the DSWA is aware, and respectful, of open members offering professional services. In this instance, the DSWA is concerned with those who support the aims and objectives of the organisation, preferring not to distinguish between those who are 'qualified' to work as professionals. Despite this respect, it nonetheless remains that unlisted individuals practicing professionally make it much more difficult to measure and maintain craft standards.

Though they are not described here, there may, of course, be a range of reasons why some individuals choose not to be involved with the DSWA. An organisation that is no longer

affiliated with the DSWA is the West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association. The West of Scotland group once existed as a branch of the DSWA but in recent years has established itself as a Scottish charity and organisation in its own right. Like the DSWA, their overall aim is to promote the craft through training, demonstrations and education and frequently do this as part of community projects. There is a wide range of expertise within the group, comprised of both hobbyist and professional craftspeople. The group is extremely active throughout the year, taking on a wide variety of dry-stone challenges, including the construction of a bridge and rebuilding a 300-year old dry-stone barn. In addition to individuals and groups in Britain which participate in walling outside of the DSWA, Chapter 1 noted that there are thriving walling communities that exist around the world. Some have gained inspiration from the DSWA but many have established organisations appropriate to their own requirements. It is therefore clear there is much to be gained, in terms of practical skill and knowledge, from an awareness of geographically diverse approaches to walling.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to provide an historical, empirical and organisational context for dry-stone walls and walling practice in Britain and beyond. A review of the dry-stone walling literature has uncovered a lack of engagement with embodied and emotional interaction with dry-stone. In a quest to enliven the historical geographies of walling, the memoirs of a dyker working during the early 1900s were examined. In paying attention to Robert Cairns' descriptions of clothing, working conditions and dyke-building techniques, it was possible to draw out the embodied and emotional nuances particular to early 20th century walling work. Additionally, this narrative introduced a version of dry-stone walling which existed prior to the establishment of the Stewartry Drystane Dyking Committee in the late 1930s; an event which characterised walling as a craft and skill in danger of being lost. In examining the development of the craft since Cairns' time, it was necessary to consider the role of the DSWA in the development of contemporary walling culture. Starting out as a provincial organisation, with a small community of like-minded individuals, the association has had to be responsive and adaptable in order to secure pockets of funding. In doing so, dry-stone walls and walling skills have been marketed as a valuable form of cultural heritage, which draw attention from various funding organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Prince's Countryside fund and EU funding in the form of the Lifelong Learning Programme. The activities of the DSWA support, and are in turn, supported by a socially diverse group of individuals, from those

interested in practising professionally, to those as an occasional hobby. Subsequent empirical chapters consider such interests in more detail, questioning in which ways such social diversity contributes to contemporary dry-stone craft cultures.

It has also been the aim of this chapter to establish a narrative for how the dry-stone walling craft, and the lives of the wallers, has developed since the early 20th century. Working conditions have improved and opportunities for career development expanded since Cairns' time, resulting in wallers being regarded as highly-skilled craftspeople. Using extracts from interviews with professional dykers, the following chapter further details how dyking has changed in terms of employment and trade, but also begins to demonstrate how new dyking craft cultures have developed. Notably, it reflects on the shift from employment previously focussed on agricultural boundaries to the current demand for domestic and community-orientated dyking work.

Chapter 5 : The Contemporary Dry-Stone Walling Profession

“...[dyking] is growing, but it’s not growing because of farming and that’s my background. Most of it is growing now either in gardens, landscaping, or its in big estates...They are the folk now that’s got money” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

While the previous chapter focussed on dyking labour and practice prior to the First World War, this section will describe and explain developments in the dyking profession during the latter 20th and into the 21st century. In doing so, it will identify the ways in which various cultural and social geographies of walls and the walling craft are produced through knowledge practices, techniques and traditions and prevalent economic conditions. Building upon discussions from Chapter 4 which focussed on the role of the DSWA in supporting the development of walling skills, this chapter begins by introducing the notion of dry-stone walling as a valued traditional craft and profession. From the establishment of the Stewartry Drystane Dyking Committee in the late 1930s, the walling trade has continued to undergo significant changes, becoming less focussed upon the building and maintenance of agricultural walls, and more on the construction of decorative ornamental features found in domestic and community gardens. The second half of the chapter will draw upon interview extracts to provide a composite biography of the contemporary craftsperson and thus illustrate how different the lifestyle of a waller is now from those working in the 20th century.

Contemporary Walling and Dyking

As detailed in the previous chapter, the notes of Robert Cairns provide important insights to the life and embodied practices of an agricultural dyker. Unfortunately following Cairns’ return from the war and subsequent appointment at Stobo Castle in the Scottish Borders, his stories all but cease. The little he did divulge about his life as estate mason and dyker reveal feelings of frustration and sadness at the sight of the deteriorating estate dykes as a result of having little time to devote to their repair. Rainsford-Hannay (1957) suggests that as a result of budgets being cut and men – including dykers – going to war, the dyking profession, and maintenance of the dykes, suffered greatly. Making specific

reference to Deeside, Callander (1982) believed estate dyking survived the upheaval of the First World War due to a combination of the high number of dykes in the area, and the wealth and willingness of landowners who wished them maintained. Whilst these examples are geographically specific to rural economies and it is not appropriate to generalise, it is possible that similar trends prevailed in other wealthy estates in Scotland. However as implied by Cairns' account of decreasing work at Stobo Castle, it cannot be assumed that estate land, even with the employment of an estate dyker, would have well-maintained dykes.

Callander (1982) notes how by the 1930s, even in the dyking stronghold of Deeside, rates of pay deteriorated such that dykers started seeking employment elsewhere. By the late 1930s, a group of farmers and landowners came together to form a Dry Stone Dyking Committee in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbrightshire in South West Scotland.⁴⁶ Author of *Dry Stone Walling* (1957), Colonel F. Rainsford-Hannay was principally involved in the committee and immediately proposed a dyking competition be held in the summer of 1939. Although the threat of war delayed the event until October of that year, the competition received a gratifying response with twenty-six people competing – a number which in Rainsford-Hannay's words, "fairly astonished the pessimists" (1957: 62). While elsewhere in this chapter there is greater detail given about competitions, it is noted here since it appears to be one of the first instances in which dyking is referred to as a craft, or at the very least, regarded as a traditional 'twilight' skill in danger of being lost. With the reduction in employment related to agricultural dykes, Rainsford-Hannay and his contemporaries were concerned about the status of rural craft. A newspaper extract from 1939 notes that the Stewartry competition was held in response to anxiety over the lack of skilled dykers, and a perceived need to repair dykes around Galloway. Further demonstrating the labelling of dyking in terms of craft, the author claimed that:

"The principles of good dyking are in danger of being forgotten, and it is hoped that the competition will reawaken an interest in the craft of dry stane dyking and go a long way towards showing what skilled dyking means."⁴⁷

Further demonstrating nation-wide concern over the status of dyking, the article concludes with a request that other competitions be held elsewhere in order to "extend its scope."⁴⁸ There is little evidence of other competitions taking direct influence from the Stewartry,

⁴⁶ Information provided by Dr. David Hannay, grandson of Colonel F. Rainsford-Hannay, a keen hobbyist dyker who in 1957, wrote "*Dry Stone Walling*", one of the first books on walling and dyking ever published.

⁴⁷ Extract from: 'The Highland Show at Edinburgh: Farming notes,' *The Scotsman*, June 23rd 1939, p. 7

⁴⁸ Ibid.

but until 1955, the competition was held a further seven times and despite competitor numbers falling slightly due to the war, there were never fewer than twenty dykers competing (Rainsford-Hannay 1957).

The establishment of the Stewartry Dry Stone Dyking Committee and the subsequent competitions marks a pivotal moment in dyking culture; the skill of constructing a solid, stock proof wall comes to be regarded and repositioned as a craft. Indeed, the actions and passion demonstrated by Colonel F. Rainsford-Hannay are crucial. Until his death in 1961, he remained convenor of the Stewartry Committee, at which point the post was taken over by a Mrs. Murray-Usher.⁴⁹ Under the care of Mrs. Murray-Usher, the Stewartry Committee would eventually inspire and endorse the establishment of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain in 1968.⁵⁰ The following section further develops discussion around the changing culture of professional dyking, noting the advent of the Dry Stone Walling Association in 1968 and subsequent influences upon the trajectory of the craft. It will focus particularly upon the progression from agricultural dyking to domestic decorative features, and its corresponding re-situation in garden and property improvement. Extracts from interviews with current practitioners are used to illustrate the impacts and influences this development has had upon the social, economic and cultural geographies of the contemporary walling profession.

From Farms to Gardens

In the years since the first dry-stone dyking competition in 1939, dyking as a profession has undergone significant changes. It was originally intended that dyking competitions would breathe new life into agricultural dyking and consolidate dyke-building as a notable traditional craft, but Rainsford-Hannay and his fellow advocates could not anticipate the trajectories dyking would take over the subsequent seventy years. For many of the dykers interviewed, a lot of their income is now no longer derived from agricultural dykes, but from decorative work in private gardens or community spaces. Using extracts from interviews with current dyking professionals, this section focuses on the impact such changes have had upon the trade as well as practitioners' perceptions of dyking culture. In subsequent sections efforts are made to explore why rising labour costs, combined with reductions in agricultural grants and a renewed public interest in traditional crafts, are variously responsible for these changes and trends.

⁴⁹ Information provided by Dr. David Hannay, grandson of Colonel F. Rainsford-Hannay.

⁵⁰ Information provided by Ms. Alison Shaw, current Secretary of the Dry Stone Walling Association.

It is a common perception amongst members of the public that dry-stone dyking is a craft in need of revival. In 2009, a long-running *Guardian* series called “Disappearing Acts” featured walling as a craft requiring rejuvenation (Henley 2009). However during my conversations with professional dykers, it became clear that most believed dyking to be in a very healthy state and were, in fact, keen to dispel this myth:

“...the more that we can put to bed the idea that dyking is a dying art or trade [the better] ...Because most people don't see it actually happening around them, they see all these, obviously old bits of wall around the countryside and they think that's done and dusted and nobody does it anymore but, I give or have given quite a lot of talks where I describe dyking as a living art rather than a dying art, and show people there is lots going on” (Adam, 15th January 2013)

*“...the number of people who have commented to me over the years...when strangers come up to you and you just know as soon as they start talking that they're going to trot out one of several clichés and you just go, oh here we go, and the first thing they'll say to you, oh, it's a dying art, and you go, eh, no its not, and you don't see much of that anymore, and I say, you do if you open your eyes and they say these things **all** the time and the public just don't think that what we do is...it's just never gone away...” (Original emphasis) (Craig, 18th December 2012)*

Frustration, and even irritation, associated with the question of dyking being perceived as a ‘dying art or trade’ was common amongst participants. This was understandable as many were passionate about their work and actively involved in promoting either their own skills or the collective craft community in the form of the Dry Stone Walling Association. In some cases, the health of the craft was directly linked to the establishment of the DSWA in 1968:

“Not [in danger of dying] with the dry stone walling association...I mean that is now almost 50 years old and it was established when it was thought the skills were being lost and in fact it has done a fantastic job in promoting the craft through the craft skills certificates.” (Malcolm, 4th December 2012)

“Not really [in danger of dying] because the DSWA as an entity, carry out lots of training courses in the year.” (Graham, 12th December 2012)

Some also perceived its survival to be related to a recent upsurge of public interest in home and garden improvements, which combined with an understanding of how stone can be

used, encourage people to look to dry-stone dykers to construct aesthetically attractive garden features:

“...over the years, people have promoted the likes of landscaping, the use of stone has been promoted by the association and these landscaping programmes have helped promote the use of stone as well” (Alex, 16th January 2013)

“...it’s also one of these things that I think is quite fashionable...from my perspective, everything on the telly at the moment seems to be a cookery programme, whereas five or ten years ago everything on the telly was a gardening programme and people saw dry-stone walling and thought, ooh, I want that, or I want to be able to do that, so they’ve either got to learn it or get somebody in. So it became quite trendy for a while to have a dry-stone wall in your garden or to learn dry-stone walling” (Peter, 22nd January 2013)

“It’s the Andy Goldsworthies⁵¹ ...I think that’s promoting it a bit as well...these coffee-table books and things...a lot of stone features in those...” (Colin, 29th January 2013)

“...as people get more into their gardens and their home improvements...it’s just moving to a different kind of...a different kind of...I mean the thing [dry-stone dyking] has never gone away, it’s never died, it’s just found a new lease of life really” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

As the last of these quotations indicate, dyking has found a niche within another industry – privately contracted domestic work. Whilst it has been suggested that demand for these features might in some ways be driven by popular culture, those interviewed also suggested an additional influence. Stone as a material is replete in geological history and evokes a satisfying sense of permanence and solidarity. Dry-stone walls reinforce this security of ‘deep time’, in part reflecting a technique of ‘earth-writing’ originating from approximately 3000BC (McAfee 2011), but also as a result of continuity and longevity of walls seen throughout Britain. Professional waller, Dan Snow, talks of handling stone as a way of paying elemental attention to the Earth, water, air and non-human inhabitants and appreciating each stone in terms of its own individual history (Snow 2008). Similarly, the technique involves extremely basic principles and uses few tools and therefore acts as a reminder of a simpler, pre-technological age that some individuals may feel nostalgia for,

⁵¹ Andy Goldworthy is a British artist and sculptor who uses natural materials, including stone, in his work (National Gallery of Art 2013).

and find reassuring or comforting. In the words of one professional, people want a “bit of the old world, a nice bit of old stone around their house” [Archie, 14th December 2012]. Or, in a more marketing-savvy approach that speaks of an attempt to reproduce distinctive landscape characteristics, one professional, sells walling as “a way of giving them [customers] a touch of the Yorkshire Dales in their own little space.” [Frank, 14th December 2012]. Likewise, wallers themselves may also find something historically satisfying within the construction process:

“I love the idea of stone being able to be coaxed to look authentic and traditional and structural.” (Tom, 12th December 2012)

“...if something has been knocked down you can put it back again into something as good as new, or good as old, depending on your point of view.” (Alex, 16th January 2013)

As a result of dry-stone walls being regarded as culturally attractive features reflecting an old-world charm, many wallers find themselves in high demand with customers seeking “a touch of the Yorkshire Dales” in the back garden. However such work is not limited to the construction of simple walls defining garden perimeters. During interviews with professionals, I asked each craftsman to identify what kind of work they were involved in building. Of the twenty-three professionals consulted, 57% told me that they were involved in a mixture of farm and garden features, 30% were predominately paid to do garden or ornamental features, while the remaining 13% were mostly involved in building or repairing agricultural walls. Although this sample is not representative of the entire professional walling population of Britain, these numbers do indicate that many individuals derive a high proportion of their income from decorative dry-stone work in private or community gardens. There were many examples of the type of decorative work being done, including boundary walls, retaining walls, steps, stone seats and benches, or most unusual of all, the prow of a boat built entirely in dry-stone.

One example of domestic project work is telling. In April 2013 I met with a professional dry-stone waller at a project site on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The project was based within a private garden where the design brief was to build a series of terraced dry-stone retaining walls to provide structure, and allow access, to the steeply sloped garden. The area was quite extensive and required significant excavation of soil and rubble prior to building commencement. Approximately forty tonnes of stone was salvaged from the excavation material with another forty tonnes being provided by a local quarry. As the professional was undertaking the majority of the work alone, it was a sizeable project.

Figure 5-1 is a photograph of the garden on the day of my visit and shows part of the area under construction. The waller told me that pale coloured sandstone was chosen as building material to ensure the formerly gloomy garden would remain as bright as possible.



Figure 5-1: Image of garden project, Edinburgh, April 2013. (Photo by author.)

The image also shows two reddish-coloured sandstone pieces that the waller described as “monoliths”. Amongst several others, these monoliths were found within the excavated material and were determined too beautiful not to use. As demonstrated in the photograph, they were incorporated into the wall to contrast with the other stone. The professional told me how the design of this particular garden was constantly changing and developing as the work progressed, an instructive example of how wallers use different and unexpected stone types in visually appealing and structurally effective ways. This creative ability has allowed skilled craftspeople to construct a variety of different dry-stone features closely linked to garden landscaping techniques:

“It’s all garden work I do. I haven’t done field wall repair for many, many years, so it’s all kind of hard landscaping...A typical job would be building brocade walls and steps and benches and at the moment I’m replacing a brick wall outside a house in

Bathgate, building some stone pillars, and I've done lots of benches and did an arched recess for my last job.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

Around five of the twenty-three professionals interviewed also had other building related businesses or employment *in addition* to walling, including masonry work, landscaping or general estate maintenance. On occasion it was noted that the skills associated with walling complemented this other work, particularly in relation to the construction of decorative features:

“I also have a landscape design business that takes more of my time than stonework and of course people want stone work in gardens as well so the two complement one another quite well. I built a rock garden for one woman...It's not walling but if you have a feel for the stone that helps.” (Gareth, 29th January 2013)

“I can make more money doing the higher, masonry side of it than I can doing dry-stone walls...I have no doubts that I am where I am because of learning the craft of dry-stone walling.” (Alex, 16th January 2013)

Indeed, walling work may be thought of along a spectrum of skills: at one end, precise techniques complement decorative landscaping work, whilst at the other end of the scale, faster, slightly rougher work is better suited to agricultural wall construction. One professional – who at the time of interview was in the midst of making a conscious business move from agricultural walls to more decorative features – seemed keenly aware of this “skill spectrum.”⁵²

“It's sort of different, when you're doing the field walls, it's all about speed and getting the walls up quickly, not so much about the beauty of it, it's the strength of the wall and the look from the distance [that matter]. Whereas the domestic work, you're working with better stone, you can make it a lot more appealing to the eye. Precision, take your time over it.” (Frank, 14th December 2012)

In relation to the more precise work associated with decorative domestic features, wallers often require the use of a walling hammer in order to shape, split or trim the stone to fit intricate spaces (BTCV 1986). As Figure 5-2 shows, hammers can vary in size and shape due to the type of stone to be worked and as demonstrated by the varied geology of the British Isles, reveal a regional preference for shape and size (BTCV 1986). Although the

⁵² See Chapter 6: ‘A Sense of Stone’ (p. 186) for more detail on dry-stone walling skill development.

use of a hammer is not in any way restricted by the DSWA, a quotation in one of the Associations' recommended texts' suggests they should be used sparingly:

“One should manage with the stones as they are, especially stones from an existing wall that's fallen. They have been used before; it should be possible to use them again.” (Brooks in BTCV 1986: 56)

This attitude was one shared by a number of interviewees, particular individuals who had the opportunity to travel to international walling events and observe the kind of techniques being used overseas. The following quotes were discussed in relation to North American dry-stone walling practices, where crafting communities have been successfully established in several regions, including, but not limited to, California, Kentucky and parts of Canada.

“But they hammer every stone to death. They don't wall they...there is a difference between walling and building walls...you can build a wall...dry-stone walling is a process that you don't necessarily have to beat every stone to death...you can beat every stone to death and build a wall but that isn't walling as such” (Paul, 10th December 2012)

Rather than emphasising compatibility between walling and landscaping type work, as had been suggested by other professionals, this example highlights perceived differences between walling, and what these professionals identified as masonry work. In Britain, walling and masonry are extremely different; masonry involves the use of mortar to bind stones together, however, in this example, masonry was not used in this context.

Somewhat confusingly, the professionals did not refer to the use of mortar in the walls, but rather to indicate how the North American technique of shaping each stone was closer to that of precise masonry work, rather than the British understanding of walling that seeks to use stone as it is found. Alongside the tone of professionals as they spoke about their North American experiences, their comments also implied walling to be a much more skilful technique than masonry. For example, the line, “beat[ing] every stone to death” suggests the stone must be in a submissive state before it can be used for building. Such sentiments echo what one professional with over twenty years of walling experience described as a divide between walling and masonry:

“Here there's still the divide between the masons and the wallers. But that's changing and I think that anyone coming into dry-stone walling would at least need

to know a bit about cutting stone and the properties of stone. So that's changed quite a bit, even in my time." (Doug, 6th December 2012)

This statement also suggests an attention to detail and an ability to trim and shape stone are skills increasingly demanded of a dry-stone craftsman, particularly if a proportion of their income is derived from constructing ornamental garden features. Although this is the perspective of one individual, within the context of earlier remarks, this statement illustrates how within Britain and beyond, walling for contemporary domestic purposes is becoming more precise, decorative and sought after.



Figure 5-2: Collection of walling hammers. Left to right: 4lb Pennine, 3lb Pennine, 2½lb Pennine, Scutch, 4lb Catchie, 2½lb French style (Source: DSWA 2014b: n.p.n.)

All the same, it is important to note, that such developments do not mean that the traditional elements of dry-stone walling are being wholly relegated. Quite the contrary. The DSWA approved training manuals, such as, *Dry-stone Walling: A Practical Conservation Handbook*, promote the use of traditional techniques and approaches to building as they are the most efficient and effective methods of construction.

Building commentary around evidence from seasoned walling professionals, this section has charted the progression of the walling trade from its agricultural roots in rebirth and revival within landscape gardening and ornamental work. This phase of change is strongly related to the perceived aesthetic appeal of traditional approaches to stone work and as such, demonstrates a market pull in the direction of smaller-scale decorative features. However, as the following section will now explain, financial incentives heavily weighted towards decorative work, also contribute to such cultural change.

Economies of Stone

This chapter began with a quote from a dyker who, with over twenty years of professional experience, considered the growth of dyking within private gardens or landscaping to be the result of financial pressure. In his own words, private landowners or estate managers are “the folk that’s got money” [Doug, 6th December 2012] and, unlike farmers, are able to pay for new walls or features to be built on their land. This view was common amongst those interviewed. Whilst many told of careers that began with agricultural walling, they then explained a move away to domestic features, usually in search of better pay. The following quote from a professional based near the Cotswolds in England sums up a sentiment shared by many:

“What I do is actually is garden walls, so a step up from field walls, thing is field walls don’t really pay very well” (Ian, 12th December 2012)

This lack of financial incentive within the agricultural sector has led many professionals to seek better paying work within the garden industry, which is of little surprise when costs of such features often total several thousands of pounds. Although the professionals were cautious about disclosing rates of pay, one dyker working in and around an urban area of Scotland⁵³ quoted £4000 as the average cost for a garden project in 2012-2013. Of course it is important to note that such pricing can vary considerably according to the type of stone used and distance from the quarry, and is also based upon the significant amount of time and skill required to construct such features. In terms of agricultural walling, it is the costs attributed to time and skill that often make it poorly paid.

“...it is manpower intensive. You can’t get away from the fact that no machine can do this work, no tool can do this work and it is sweat and muscle. And you have to pay for that.” (Edward, 24th January 2013)

As the quote indicates, there is no easy way of constructing a dry-stone wall. It must be done by human hand, which takes a significant amount of time and therefore, money. When compared with other methods of boundary construction, it is of little wonder why many farmers or land managers opt for cheaper alternatives:

“At the end of the day it comes down to money, it costs a lot of money to build a wall, if you’ve got 100 metres of wall that needs quite a lot of work...my dad and I will put up a 100 metre fence in a day, but it might take us a month to build or repair a 100

⁵³ Specific details have been deliberately omitted to ensure anonymity.

metre wall, so the expense is just off the scale compared to building a fence.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

The high costs associated with repairing agricultural walls are also causing some people concern over their condition:

“To try and earn anything more than £40 a metre for repairing a field wall is just about impossible. So field walls are getting into an increasingly poor state which has been my concern for some while.” (Malcolm, 4th December 2012)

Certainly, one only has to cast an eye across the countryside to see examples of walls left to ruin, or patched with barbed wire and fence posts. I was told a similar story by many people throughout Britain, which seems to indicate a nationwide concern over the state of agricultural walls. Indeed, the Dry Stone Walling Association is well aware of such anxiety. Its Statement of Policy, explains how they work “to resist the unnecessary destruction, either by design or neglect, of existing dry-stone walls/dykes” (DSWA 2004b: n.p.n.), and encourage the maintenance of existing walls and promote the rebuilding of those which have become derelict. However the high costs associated with repair mean professionals are also concerned about less experienced wallers seeking to undercut costs and as a result, produce a lower standard of work. One professional, based in the Cotswolds in England offers this view:

“The simple fact is that you don’t make much money from [agricultural] walling properly. If you cut corners you can make a hell of a lot more money. It wasn’t too bad when I started but it seemed to have a real peak in end of the 80s and 90s, there were so many cowboys about it was hardly worth doing a job because they’d end up undercutting you because they’d just put some concrete in the middle and walk away, it would probably last five years, of course the cheque had cleared and that was it.” (Ian, 12th December 2012)

The context of the quote implies that the situation has improved since the 1980s and 1990s, however it remains extremely difficult to measure the quality of work being done, since as suggested, a poorly constructed wall may stand for five years or more. Another professional concerned about the quality of walling in both the agricultural and domestic sector, suggested a lack of respect for the skills involved was also reflected in poor quality construction:

“The attitude is that if you’ve ever looked at a wall you know how to build it and if you were born on a farm you know absolutely everything there could possibly be

about it, so there is a huge danger that the skill side of it is going out the window. And the work is absolutely appalling.” (Paul, 10th December 2012)

This professional is also extremely concerned about the survival of the skills, as well as the quality of the walls themselves. He went on to explain how when openly challenging the quality of another’s work, he was accused of having a “vested interest” [Paul, 12th December 2012], or this being simply a case of ‘sour grapes’. He denied such motives, insisting that high quality work was his main concern:

“I don’t care whether or not I get a job I just want it done reasonably well.” (Paul, 12th December 2012)

For this waller, concern over the quality of work and the often derelict state of farm walls is strongly related to the lack of agricultural grants available for their maintenance. Many others reported this as a reason for the decline in opportunities in agricultural walling, subsequently leading to a pronounced shift into garden work:

“But it’s really the funding that the farmers don’t get that’s really, sort of forcing [people into domestic walling]...I mean I’m sure farmers would be happy to have wallers back on if it was paying for itself, but when they look at from a business management [perspective], it’s not cost effective.” (Colin, 29th January 2013)

“The market has kind of dropped a little bit because the money isn’t so readily available for farmers to be spending the money on the walls...so the only work we really do for farmers now is stuff that’s been damaged, so insurance stuff.” (Alex, 16th January 2013)

It was claimed that over the years, as policy changed, there were fewer grants available and fewer farmers who had money to spend on the repair of their walls. Testament to the complex nature of the grant system, very few were able to explain the exact ways in which the policy had changed and therefore, impacted upon their walling trade. Indeed, the EU is currently undergoing another reform in agricultural policy.

Agricultural grants are controlled under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), an EU policy established in 1962. In addition to its key aims to improve agricultural productivity and ensure farmers are able to make a fair living, the CAP is also concerned with rural economies and the appropriate management of the countryside (European Commission 2012). In December 2013, after three years of intense public debate, agreement was reached by the Council of EU Agricultural Ministers confirming the framework for 2014-

2020 CAP (European Commission 2013). The specifics of how the reformed CAP is to be implemented in Britain will vary accordingly across the devolved governments, with each currently in the process of determining the final format. At present, it is therefore difficult to establish how the maintenance and repair of agricultural dry-stone walls might be funded in the future.

The formation of the Stewartry Dry Stone Dyking Committee and the event of the first dyking competition in the late 1930s signified a pivotal moment in dyking culture. Once lamented as a skill in danger of being lost, it became regarded and valued as a traditional countryside craft, worthy of promotion and support. However despite the efforts of several pioneering individuals, the recent reduction in the availability of agricultural grants for wall repair, combined with high labour costs have meant the improvement of farm dykes is often financially prohibitive for many landowners. As a result, few contemporary wallers are solely dependent upon agricultural-based employment. The desire for an attractive garden and aesthetic appeal of stone, mean that private householders are drawn to dry-stone features as ways to improve the land around their property. Combined with the support and training provided by the DSWA, professional craftspeople are able to take advantage of this growing market for decorative dry-stone features, and in respect of the often high-quality results, are able to generate a significantly higher financial return than would be possible from agricultural walling. As such, the changing culture of the walling craft is influenced by a variety of factors, including the aesthetic appeal of stone, prevailing economic conditions and the actions of the DSWA to ensure the survival of dry-stone skill. To examine in more detail the ways in which the cultural and social geographies of the contemporary walling craft are variously produced, the following section considers the role of professional and amateur practitioners, their walling values and engagement within craft practices.

Biography of Contemporary Wallers

In order to develop an understanding of what it means to be a contemporary waller, in depth interviews with twenty-six individuals were conducted. Three participants were female, and the ages of the participants ranged from nineteen to over sixty-five. Of the twenty-six, three were considered to be amateur wallers as they earned little or no income from the activity. The remainder of participants considered themselves professional at various career stages. Some had other sources of employment in addition to walling. Of the professionals, there was almost an even split between those who were working full time, 57%, and those working part time, 43%. The following sections cover three main

themes from the interviews; the motivations for walling, the opportunities for career development and importance of ‘performing’ the craft at public events. Extracts from interviews and documentary sources will continue to be used to illustrate the experiences of the participants.

Why Wall?

The motivation and drive to pursue a career in walling was found to be the result of a range of different factors. In the cohort of professionals interviewed, 30% began walling professionally early in their working lives and, whether in conjunction with other employment or as their sole source of income, continue to do so. It is therefore possible to consider this group to be early or first career wallers. In terms of their source of instruction or connection to walling, 57% of early wallers indicated a family connection to walling and all having learnt from their fathers, had taken up the trade as a result. The remainder had no family connection to walling, but 29% pointed out that as a result of growing up on a farm they had established some understanding of the skills required for walling.

Historically, as in the case of Robert Cairns, it was usual for sons to learn walling from fathers and accompany them on different projects. However, today, this generational route is no longer considered common. Although within the early career wallers those learning from their father makes up a majority, within the context of the larger group of professionals, those that learnt from their fathers accounts for only 17%. Of all twenty-three professionals interviewed, only one continued to work with his father.

The majority (70%) of professionals arrived into the walling trade later in life, often after one or two different career paths. None of those who arrived at walling later in life were aware of any history of walling in their family. In support of this statement, Stebbins remarks that it is common for “late-blooming interests” (1992: 73) to develop independently of peers and family. However not all began walling with the intention of becoming professional. Just over half of the late career wallers began walling initially as a hobby, and then at various stages, became professional. Stebbins (1992) considers there to be a distinct transition between being a hobbyist and becoming a serious amateur or professional. He describes the point at which one becomes a serious amateur (and subsequently professional) is when a “substantial awareness of the pursuit itself” is developed (1992:71). In other words, those interested in walling became serious amateurs when they made a conscious decision to take control and pursue further avenues for learning. Figure 5-3 shows a storied sketch of one dykers’ journey into professional work. In making a transition from a previous career, this dyker told me how he began to gain

experience through the repair and rebuilding of agricultural dykes and in time, earning a respectable reputation. He describes going “looking for walls that were beginning to go” and knocking on doors to ask landowners if – for a reduced fee – they would like to have their walls repaired. Evidenced by his willingness to undercharge for his efforts, this story demonstrates the dykers’ conscious decision and determination to improve his skills and pursue walling beyond a hobbyist interest.

Similarly, earning DSWA qualifications is considered an example of exercising control and demonstrating awareness of skill progression. Some, encouraged by qualified professionals and the prospect of being offered payment for their work, subsequently made the first step to becoming professional:

“I started to do some building work, some dry-stone repair work for a friend and it was just really to get me out of the house while I was doing a job search for a proper job. And eventually the farmers started paying me for the work I was doing and they passed my name onto some of the neighbouring farmers in the area and I started doing work for them and I realised this was a way I could probably make money.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

“There were a lot of dykes on the farm, I was unemployed at the time and I started rebuilding them to fill in time. So just out of interest really. We then got friendly with the farmer and people started asking me to do it professionally.” (Andrew, 17th January 2013)

Two of the late-career, hobbyist-turned-professionals spoke directly about what attracted them to pursue a career in walling. Both arrived from careers very different to walling and having determined they were sufficiently skilled, found the walling lifestyle to be more appealing than their previous employment. The flexibility associated with being self-employed was of significant appeal to both individuals:

“It’s also wrapped up in the fact that I’m self employed so I work for myself, you know when I worked for a company in my previous life you’re always at someone else’s call, whereas now I run my own business it’s quite satisfying. At the end of the financial year putting your accounts together and looking at your turnover and going oh, I managed to make all that with my own hands.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

“I did know that I wanted to be my own boss, so it’s the flexibility of that which really appeals to me, but that could have been any trade really.” (Colin, 29th January 2013)

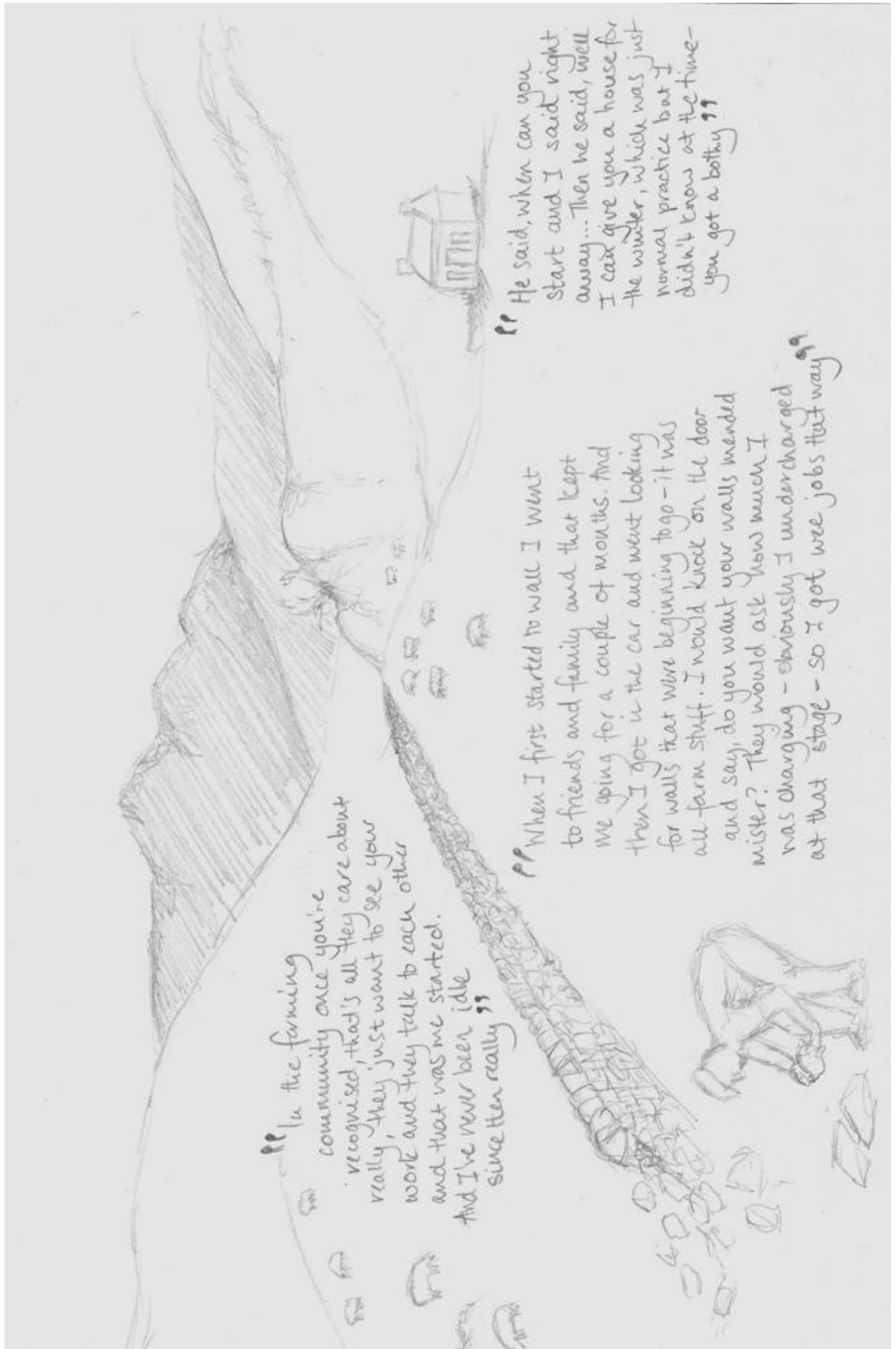


Figure 5-3: A storied sketch of one wallers' route into professional walling work. (Drawing by author.)

As mentioned in the final quote above, the flexibility of being self-employed is not restricted to the pursuit of walling, but may be found in a range of trades or occupations. Indeed some of the appeal is not always specifically linked to the walling craft, but is the lifestyle afforded by the activity that attracts those to pursue it professionally. In relation to walling, an example of this is the desire to work outdoors:

“I think having worked in an office for quite a long time and having worked outside for quite a long time now too, this is definitely something I prefer to do...there’s a lot more freedom and I’ve noticed that I’m a lot healthier than I used to be.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

For many, the pleasure of being out of doors and the enjoyment of various outdoor pursuits meant they felt well suited to the dyking lifestyle. In some cases a love for the outdoors was used as a way of explaining how they became interested in dyking, suggesting enjoyment of the outdoors was a key factor in their ‘dyking journey’:

“I’ve always been keen on the outdoor life; I do a lot of long distance walking with my wife, so I like the outdoors. When I got made redundant again and I had no work to do, I started a course which just had one day dry-stone walling, which I really enjoyed.” (Frank, 14th December 2012)

“I used to do a fair bit of hill walking and fell running and things like that, so those [walls] were the sort of things I was falling over and trying to climb over I suppose.” (Colin, 29th January 2013)

In other cases, previous outdoor employment was mentioned in relation to developing an interest in dyking, or in the case of the following example, a curiosity about the mechanics of the wall:

“In my previous employment I was a gamekeeper, stalker for an estate and it wasn’t that it was involved in my work, but it was part of the landscape and I was intrigued one day to get into the wall and see what was making the wall hold together you know, and because of that I discovered what was holding what together and how it was constructed. Then I wanted to build my own wall round my garden, so I just went ahead and did it myself without any help or anything.” (Archie, 14th December 2012)

Curiosity may also stem from an exposure to particular walling landscapes in childhood. An up-bringing on a farm or holidaying in a wall-rich countryside may be described as a

biographic encounter, where landscape memories and past experiences inform identity and a sense of place within the world (Pearson 2006). For this dyker, a hint of nostalgia serves to confirm a long-held fascination and reinforce a sense of satisfaction derived from work:

“We used to go camping up there and we’d work on a farm. We got bread and milk and eggs and things for helping, occasionally we mended walls and I just thought, wow, this is fantastic. So I was always fascinated by dry-stone and I used to sit in the garden when I was a wee boy and I would try and make dry-stone things with pebbles lying around and got nowhere.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

Although a deep understanding, curiosity and love for the outdoors may prompt an interest in the walling craft, it is also a reason for why many are motivated to remain in the trade. Working in a pleasant location can play an enormous role in the enjoyment of walling, particularly for wallers who rebuild agricultural walls:

“When it’s beautiful sunshine and you’re out at 6 o’clock in the morning, standing on a beach building a wall on the head of the shore, looking out at a flat, calm blue sea and you’re thinking, I’m getting paid for this.” (Brian, 17th December 2012)

Scenic landscapes may therefore contribute to the enjoyment of walling, but it is insufficient to attribute such positive feelings to location alone. Gesler (1992) and Conradson (2005) note that people interpret places in different ways and that positive experiences are dependent upon complex cultural, social, environmental and personal factors. In line with Pearson’s (2006) definition of landscape as a ‘biographic encounter’, Conradson (2005) considers landscape experience as a relational encounter between person and environment, where meaning is derived from broader social and cultural contexts of memory and past experiences. As is demonstrated in the following quote, it is the dykers’ relational encounter with non-human animals that make his outdoor work satisfying and enjoyable:

“I wouldn’t want to be working inside all the time...getting to see the wildlife and things like that, things that you wouldn’t see in an office, that’s great, being close to nature in some respect, being in the outdoors you know. It’s a great thing to be listening to and watching wildlife and being there and seeing things you wouldn’t normally see...animals coming out, deer, even livestock you know, there’s something about it, being around livestock, whether its horses or whatever, they’ll come up to see you, saying, what are you doing? Looking at you and just the fact of being there

with them, they're at ease with you and you're at ease with them - it's nice." (Alex, 16th January 2013)

The relational experiences of place and non-human inhabitants go a long way to describe the positive aspects of walling, however as Ingold (2000) suggests these factors should not be considered alone. In his idea of taskscape, Ingold explains how meaning and emotion are also developed *through* places by engagement in place-based practices; of which dry-stone walling is one example. Furthermore, the concept of taskscape draws attention to the role of embodied acts in the process of landscaping. In following Ingold, it is important to recognise that embodied practices, such as walling, are not inscribed *upon* the earth, but are "woven...into the texture of the surface itself" (Ingold 2000:198). Similarly, in taking a relational approach, the act of 'landscaping' becomes woven into our own notion of self, and provides the task with meaning. As a result, it is important to consider landscape and embodied practice in relation to each other and not as singular entities. This is evidenced by the high level of satisfaction to be gained from the embodied act of constructing a wall:

"It has a point...it's something that has a bit of meaning, building a wall, that's fine, I did that. I felt like I've achieved something." (Stephanie, 9th October 2013)

"Obviously you get 35 tonne of what looks like a big random, rough pile of stone and 3 weeks later you've built a wall with it. So it's quite rewarding from that point of view, when you finish you stand back and you know you're, happy with what you've done, you've done a good job, the customer is happy with it as well, so that's kinda the rewarding sides of building." (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

"I enjoy it when people say, "oh that's a bonny bit of dyke", it's a very simple thing, but I enjoy that and when you've done a bonny bit of dyke, you think ach, that was worth doing." (Andrew, 17th January 2013)

Also, the sense of achievement gained at completion is what some craftspeople consider to be worth any difficulties experienced during construction:

"If you get to the end of the job and take a picture of it and then a couple of days later you look at the picture again and think, oh hang about, that looks really good, doesn't it? If you can get to that stage of the job, where everything you produce is quite special to look at, even if it's just a field dyke, it's very satisfying from that point of view." (Peter, 22nd January 2013)

In *The Craftsman*, Sennett (2008) respects the sense of achievement felt by a craftsperson when a project is completed. He understands this as a way of making our presence known, of saying, “I made this; I exist” (Sennett 2008: 130) and the pride felt in ability. This applies particularly well to the dry-stone walling craft, suggesting it is possible to leave a legacy within the landscape that stands testament to the craftsmanship involved in construction:

“The nice thing about walling is you are leaving something behind, that’s hopefully going to be there for a long, long time. I’d say that is probably the most rewarding thing.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

“It’s a bit of a legacy thing as well...It’s quite nice to drive past things and say you’ve made that and you hope it outlasts you in some way.” (Colin, 29th January 2013)

The semi-permanent nature of dry-stone, combined with the pride of creating a quality structure, that with only a small degree of maintenance can remain part of landscape for decades, perhaps even posthumously, is therefore a strong rewarding and motivating factor for many wallers.

As a result, it can be said that it is a combination of the different aspects of walling which many find appealing and attractive as a source of employment. When questioned further about their walling values, many practitioners answered with a great deal of enthusiasm. Pleasure found the activity, geographical location of the work and thought of creating a legacy within the landscape, acted as positive reinforcements on their attitude and meant they felt more motivated and enthusiastic about developing their craft skills.

Career Development

As participants were primarily recruited from the online register of wallers qualified with the DSWA, all but three (12%) of the twenty-six people interviewed possessed at least the Initial certificate from the Craftsman Certifications Scheme.⁵⁴ Table 5-1 provides information on the stratification of qualified participants.

Once qualified, wallers may become members of the DSWA and register themselves on the Professional Register. The wallers’ name, contact details and level of qualification are published on a list that is organised by geographical region, both in Britain and overseas. As of 2014, there is an annual fee of £100 to become registered as a professional member.

⁵⁴ The Craftsman Certification Scheme has four levels: Initial, Intermediate, Advanced and Mastercraftsman (DSWA 2014c).

	No Certificate	Level of Certificate			
		Initial	Intermediate	Advanced	Mastercraftsman
Number of Participants	3	2	12	6	3

Table 5-1: Stratification of Craftsman Certification Scheme qualifications held by interview participants.

It is important to note that to become a successful professional waller it is not essential to gain any qualifications or be a member of the DSWA. Arguably however, being registered with the DSWA provides certain benefits, such as being involved in a vibrant community and marketing through the professional register and online forum. When questioned further on their involvement with the DSWA and reasons for becoming professionally registered, some participants were critical of the reality of the benefits. In particular, many wallers mentioned that they were rarely asked to present their certificates when tendering for work and as a result, felt there was no real incentive for them to progress onto subsequent levels of qualification:

“It gets more difficult when you go onto the advanced and mastercraftsman obviously, which I may do, but I never really get asked, ever, what kind of level of the DSWA I’ve went through. So there is not much incentive for me to go ahead and do it.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

“None of my clients have ever asked about my qualifications or membership with the DSWA so it’s never been a requirement to go to the next level.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

“When I’ve been walling I’ve never had to rely on qualifications I just had to rely on the quality of my work.” (Frank, 14th December 2012)

Contrary to these remarks however, it was noted by a highly qualified waller that certain types of walling work is only available to those who have attained and are registered as masters in the craft:

“I’ve hardly been asked for qualifications. But if you’re working for the council, and the really big jobs I’ve done, a big gardening festival in Europe and the local Council, I couldn’t have done those without having the mastercraftsman certificate.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

This suggests that the level of qualification attained can have an impact upon the type and scale of work available to the waller and thus influence career development. Some individuals may consider the next stage of qualification unnecessary for the type of work they are currently asked to do and therefore perceive little benefit to their business in gaining additional qualifications. Therefore an interest in moving up the levels may be associated with a desire to work on larger, more complex projects, or as was suggested by another participant with an advanced certificate, as a way of proving that they were capable of doing the work:

“I’d done the advanced level purely as a point of achievement for myself so that I could prove to myself that I could.” (Archie, 14th December 2012)

For a different waller, also with an advanced certificate, the process of becoming qualified was synonymous with becoming known, and taken seriously, as a professional:

“Well I knew, I couldn’t, I wouldn’t go professional until I had my advanced ticket, because I knew if I’d gone and tried to work as a dry-stone waller without any certification then I wouldn’t have had a look in. But I got my website set up, I’d done walls and I got pictures and I was all ready before I actually started charging people.” (Katie, 14th January 2013)

When questioned further on the reasons behind earning a higher level of qualification before marketing themselves, the participant clarified that it was not a conscious move to gain a competitive edge over other wallers, but was perhaps more of a confidence building exercise:

“I never really thought about the competition. No. I just thought I would have a far better chance if I had something to show that I could do the work that I said I could do.” (Katie, 14th January 2013)

The sense of pride or achievement felt in gaining qualifications demonstrates the respect afforded to the standard of building expected by the DSWA. Several wallers suggested that the DSWA qualifications were extremely important for setting an acceptable standard and quality of work for the craft. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, quality of dry-stone work throughout Britain is of concern for many professional wallers and the Craftsman Certification Scheme is one example of how the DSWA is trying to tackle this problem (DSWA 2004b).

“I think that the DSWA exams are a good way of learning. It gives you something to aim for as the standard gets higher and higher. My personal opinion is plenty of people can build dry-stone dykes but the people that build them to the correct standard are normally members of the DSWA. This is because they have been through the certification levels.” (Stuart, 24th January 2013)

“I know the DSWA in particular are very keen on standardising sort of quality and building techniques and that’s sort of their brief.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

However despite the respect shown to the DSWA certification scheme, one waller suggested that there could be more done to protect the highest craft standard. It was proposed that once wallers become qualified, their standard of work continued to be monitored through periodic visits to their work sites. This particular craftsman is well qualified, with many years of experience and a high regard for quality work:

“I’m a professional member of the DSWA, but there is nobody, no one, that comes up and phones me up out of the blue and says, where are you working the day? Can I come up and see you the day? What are you doing, can I see your last ten projects? And go and check to see if I’m actually dyking to the standard of my ticket. And that is the disappointing thing to me because they try to uphold a certain level within the DSWA yet there’s no policing of it.” (Archie, 14th December 2012)

Being a charitable organisation with limited funds and personnel, this kind of ‘policing’ may not be possible within the DSWA budget. However, according to a DSWA (2014a) publication on the certification scheme, the organisation reserves the right to re-examine individuals if they receive substantiated complaints about the standard of work being below their certification level. This situation also applies to those individuals who after an extended period without subscription as a professional member, wish remain published on the register of professional wallers.

In a further demonstration of the DSWA’s ongoing concern about the quality of walling work, those individuals who do not intend to earn any income from walling, but frequently participate in the activity are also encouraged to follow the certification scheme (DSWA 2004b). Serious amateurs involved in the operation of the regional branches of the DSWA are considered part of this group and in order to be recognised by the DSWA as suitable instructors for branch training courses, must achieve the Intermediate level certificate and pass a two-day Instructors course (DSWA 2013). Three individuals in the group of interview participants were considered to be amateurs as they did not earn a significant

income from walling. Two of these individuals were frequently involved as instructors at their local DSWA branch. Professionals who have also passed the Instructors course may also teach on the training courses. However several participants mentioned that as courses were often scheduled at the weekend for the benefit of hobbyists, they did not want to be involved in walling during their days off:

“They’ve got training days and practical dyking days for the branch, I just can’t...I’d rather do something else...at the end of the day it’s a job, it’s not an affliction, it goes away when you don’t do it anymore. It’s good to have another life and you know I’m more than happy for other people to want to learn to do it and stuff, but there are limits to how much I want to do it myself.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

“It’s a wee bit of a catch-22, because it’s your job the last thing you want to do is spend your weekend and your nights doing it as well. It tends to be the older guys who’ve maybe retired who spend a lot more time doing branch stuff.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

To some extent these opinions suggest a slight conflict in the hobbyist and professional obligations of the DSWA. For branches where there is a shortage of amateurs qualified to instruct, in order to continue running training courses for interested members of the public, the organisers are obliged to recruit professionals. Although all professionals I spoke with were supportive of hobbyists and amateurs being involved in the craft, particularly if they were correctly trained, many noted that the obligation to teach on training courses often clashed with various aspects of their personal lives. For the following individual, family life understandably takes priority:

“I’m perhaps not as involved as what I should be. Part of that is because they’re at weekends, they meet at weekends and my weekends are fairly precious. If I’m out at weekends it’s because I need to work, I’m not going to go out and do what I do for work but for free, that seems a bit silly to me. I’ve got little girls that need taken to ballet and swimming and that sort of thing.” (Peter, 22nd January 2013)

It was not only in relation to weekend training courses that wallers found themselves having to negotiate family commitments. Staying away from home and having to travel large distances for work was generally avoided by those with families:

“Well I’m a single parent so I can’t really travel.” (Katie, 14th January 2013)

“I’ve got a young family so I’m not really interested in being away and staying in caravans in the middle of winter.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

Generally however, the flexibility of walling work and being self-employed enabled individuals to build a career around their families. In order to arrange his work around collecting his children from school, one waller said that he preferred to work on larger scale agricultural projects as he could come and go as he pleased, rather than on garden projects where timescales were more regimented.

A further influence on the development of a walling career is the cost associated with progressing through the Craftsman Certification Scheme. In addition to the lack of commercial incentive mentioned by many individuals, it was also noted that the costs, both monetary and time, of gaining additional qualifications were discouraging. Table 5-2 shows the total costs⁵⁵ of each of the examinations in the four stages in the DSWA Craftsman Certification Scheme.

LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION	STAGES OF EXAMINATION			Total cost including Features (if applicable) (£)	
	Timed Examination (£)	Examination of Features		Timed Exam and On-site	Timed Exam and Off-site
		Option 1: On-site (£)	Option 2: Off-site (£)		
Initial	110	N/A	N/A	110	N/A
Intermediate	150	N/A	N/A	150	N/A
Advanced	100	150	350	250	450
Mastercraftsman	100	200	350	300	450

Table 5-2: Costs of examinations within DSWA Craftsman Certification Scheme (DSWA 2014c)

The cost of examination for both the advanced and mastercraftsman qualifications are significantly higher as it is necessary to examine a selection of wall features deemed suitable by the DSWA. These features may be constructed and examined on a test site (option 1) or, if the candidate lives a significant distance from a test site, constructed and examined off-site (option 2). Only one option is chosen, however there is a cost implication for the off-site option as it is necessary for a DSWA approved examiner to travel to the site and inspect the various elements of the features (DSWA 2014a). In addition to the cost of the examinations, the time involved in travelling to test sites and

⁵⁵ Correct as of February 2014.

constructing features for inspection was remarked as playing a role in the decision to gain additional qualifications:

“It can be quite expensive to put yourself through it, because it’s time that you’re not working...Well you are working but you’re not paid for it because you do a couple of features and then a timed test of a wall with a feature in it, to be built in 7 hours.”
(Colin, 29th January 2013)

Several other wallers commented on the ‘time cost’ associated with progressing through the certification scheme, with particular emphasis placed on the time commitment for advanced and mastercraftsman levels. One individual, encouraged to earn his advanced certificate by his wife, explained that the final decision rested on whether he considered the additional qualification to be financially worth-while:

“It gets more difficult when you go onto the advanced and mastercraftsman obviously, which I may do, but I never really get asked, ever, what kind of level of the DSWA I’ve went through. So there is not much incentive for me to go ahead and do it. It costs a lot of money as well and takes a wee bit of time to do the advanced test, you’ve got to spend a wee bit of time obviously [constructing the features], and there’s no guarantee you’re going to pass.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

In general it appears that the opportunities for developing a career in walling are strongly influenced by financial considerations and whether progressing through the craftsman certification scheme would be of benefit to a walling business. Family and personal commitments also feature as an influence upon career-based decisions. Both of these factors play a similar role in the decision to participate in craft ‘performances’ such as demonstrations or competitions.

Performing the Craft

With various traditional crafts and trades currently enjoying a revival, it is not unusual to see demonstrations or competitions at public events such as craft fairs or agricultural and flower shows. Public engagement also features within the on-line arena; videos of tutorials and demonstrations published on *YouTube* are now regarded as important ways in which people learn new skills and demonstrate creativity (Gauntlett 2011). In terms of dry-stone walling, public performances are important for challenging the common belief that it is a dying craft by demonstrating to audiences that it is both a thriving trade and engaging hobby.

During interviews, both professional and amateur wallers were asked about their involvement in demonstrations. It was particularly common for those involved with their local branch to participate in demonstration days at local or national events such as The Chelsea Flower Show, Gardening Scotland or The Royal Highland Show. One craftsperson, who participated in a competition at the Chelsea Flower Show, demonstrates the scope for exchanging knowledge and skills:

“This year at Chelsea Flower Show, the folk that I met in Slovenia came over and built one of these at the Show and I was down helping them and we won the silver medal so we were awful pleased about that.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

In addition to exhibiting the craft to the public, it is also possible to establish and strengthen networks within the walling community, or in the case of the above extract, develop international connections. Demonstrations and exhibitions were also mentioned in relation to the marketing of business. One waller was keen to explain how useful a recent demonstration at a small flower show had been to his business. As well as gaining work as a direct result of the event, it was also noted how his presence attracted a great deal of interest about dyking and questions about what it was possible to construct with dry-stone:

“We just go and build a feature really and hand out cards and leaflets. The first year we only got a few draws, but last year we actually got quite a lot of work from it. I think probably people don’t have any idea what you can actually do with stone, I think they just think you can build a wall and that’s it, but last year we built a circular, kind of horseshoe seat, high in the back and low in the sides, people can actually see that and think, oh I want that in my garden. Once people see what you can do with a pile of stone, they’re usually quite amazed. Maybe they’re thinking about landscaping their garden but they’ve not really thought about what can be done with stone. So yeah that’s probably the best kind of advertisement we do.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

In a similar way, competitions can also have a positive effect on business and publicity. As explained earlier in the chapter, walling competitions have a long history in Britain, dating back to 1939 when they first took place in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbrightshire in south west Scotland. Since then, with the exception of the Second World War, competitions have continued throughout Britain. Unfortunately there is no longer a regular competition held in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, or indeed elsewhere in Scotland. The highest concentrations of competitions are in the high-density walling areas of Cumbria, Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Wales. In 2013, there were a total of nineteen competitions,

some of which have been run for many years and have acquired iconic status within the walling community (DSWA 2014d). Though most interview participants were based in Scotland, several had attended competitions in England and Wales, and were willing to share their experiences with me.

In addition to these first-hand accounts of competing, I also observed at two walling competitions in summer 2013. As a result of these inquiries, the significance of competitions in the social geographies of the contemporary walling craft was evident. It is not unusual for keen craftspeople to travel significant distances to compete, even if this requires the individual to work with unfamiliar stone. Competitions therefore facilitate the cross-geographical sharing of craft knowledge and allow for the development of social networks between wallers:

“It’s good to meet fellow dykers when participating in competitions as we really don’t meet up much and it gives a chance to swap stories and talk about current projects.” (Stuart, 24th January 2013)

For one professional who attended competitions when he was a younger man, they are also a way of measuring skill against other competitors:

“I went to that, young, headstrong, I went thinking we were the best thing since sliced bread and then realised, wait a minute, we’re mediocre compared to some of these guys. They were really the best of the best, so I realised we needed to step up a bit if you wanted to be a...well take it more seriously I suppose.” (Alex, 16th January 2013)

Winning competitions were described by another as being the “pinnacle” of dyking, owing to the high standard of work but also the tight time limit given to construct the wall. Competitions usually take place over a full day, from 9am to 4pm. Participants are expected to build a stretch of wall of approximately 1.5 metres in length and at a full height of between 4 and 5 feet high.⁵⁶ Occasionally they are not permitted to use a hammer, frames or lines.⁵⁷ Competitors usually have to work alone but are able to choose from a number of different classes in which to enter, including Professional, Amateur, Junior and Veteran. The standard of work on show at competitions was extremely high and the time limit tight. Wallers worked conscientiously, with only a brief break for lunch in the middle

⁵⁶ Exact specifications vary between competitions and according to the stone available and the height of any nearby existing walls.

⁵⁷ Examiners at Brough Agricultural Show in Cumbria did not permit the use of hammers, frames or lines. Competitors were not permitted to use lines or frames at Kilnsey Show in Yorkshire.

of the day. The spectacle drew quite a crowd comprised of supporters, farmers, retired wallers and members of the general public (Figure 5-4). Although conversing about the wall was prohibited, there was a degree of camaraderie between the competitors and spectators, making for a fun and easy-going atmosphere. Once the competition was complete, wallers chatted easily with each other and appeared to share advice or discuss difficulties. The extensive quote below illustrates how one waller feels the benefits of shared expertise at a competition:

“The best thing that ever happened to me was the Scottish champion at the time took me under his wing and he gave me some advice, that was one good thing about it, a lot of the guys they had a kindred spirit, they were very helpful they would tell you things like this is competitive walling, its different from your general day to day walling, simply because you would spend a lot more time on something than you would do for contracting purposes. So it was at a higher level, you would make sure everything was tighter fitting, everything locked together, size and proportion were all balanced out and I took that advice onboard and I won quite a big competition down in England and that gave us quite a lot of prestige because it meant you were playing with, you were in a bigger playing field and you got the recognition and the local publicity was good for our small company.” (Alex, 16th January 2013)

In addition to developing social networks, this extract also describes how good results are a showcase for attracting further business. However, some individuals preferred to avoid competitions altogether. For many, geographical distance or weekend competitions prevented them from being involved:

“I’ve never done any competitions at all...If I’ve been doing a dyke all week, I don’t really want to be going doing a competition at the weekend.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

“If you spend all week dry-stone walling or being out doing physical work, you’re not really massively keen to do it again on a Saturday and Sunday.” (Peter, 22nd January 2013)

In addition, the cost of attending a competition was seen to be discouraging as travel, accommodation and entry costs had to be considered. Some wallers recognised that they would only be able to break-even if they won the competition:

“And it got to the stage they were always at weekends and I think dykers thought they could earn more doing a day’s work. You know the top prize still wasn’t as

much as you could earn in a day, so only one person on the day was going to be worth his while, financially.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)



Figure 5-4: Competitors and spectators at a dry-stone walling competition, Penrith Agricultural Show, Cumbria, July 2013. (Photo by author.)

Of the practitioners interviewed, interest and participation in craft performances such as public demonstrations and competitions varied between individuals. For some, these events were considered an opportunity to engage with the wider walling community and develop social networks. Competitions and demonstrations were also noted as useful marketing events, allowing professionals to showcase their work and attract new business. However other practitioners felt little was to be gained from participation in craft performances. With regard to competitions, geographical distances, time commitments and lack of financial incentive were reasons for non-participation. As such, it is important to note that participation in competitions or demonstrations is not compulsory, but dependent upon the practitioners' personal interests and circumstances. In general however, craft performances demonstrate how social networks, between craftspeople and members of the public are established, thus improving the visibility of contemporary dry-stone walling craft and culture.

Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to illustrate the cultural, social and economic geographies associated with the contemporary walling profession. In doing so, it has drawn attention to changes in the craft since the establishment of the Stewartry Dry Stone Dyking Committee in the 1930s and the DSWA in 1968. Interviews with professionals

further illustrate the evolution of the walling trade, as well as provide insight to practitioner aspirations and their thoughts on career development opportunities. The majority of professionals interviewed (70%) established their walling career later in life, after one or two careers, demonstrating the accessibility and opportunity for employment within the contemporary dry-stone industry. One of the most notable developments in walling culture has been the shift in focus from agricultural walling to decorative features. With reduced opportunity for agricultural funding and increased public interest in the ‘old-style charm’ acting as catalysts, contemporary wallers have honed their skills to produce high-quality ornamental features that are able to command a price significantly greater than that of agricultural walling.

This chapter also built upon themes established in Chapter 4 which positioned dry-stone walling as an embodied practice through which landscape and self are co-created. In doing so, the role of the contemporary walling practitioner was highlighted, with particular attention paid to the historical, social and economic factors shaping current dry-stone culture. The practice of walling can therefore be regarded as an embodied legacy of forms of craftsmanship, technique, tradition and changing economic and social conditions. Through the embodied act of landscaping (Lorimer 2005), these legacies are woven into the social, cultural and physical geographies of place, in ways that are both meaningful and physically tangible. The following chapter considers the embodied practice of walling in greater detail, examining how craft knowledge and technique are effectively transmitted and communicated through the body, and between craftspeople.

Chapter 6 : A Sense of Stone

“Stone speaks through the hands” (Snow 2008: xii)

This chapter offers an account of how, what I term, a ‘sense of stone’ develops. It charts a path from a practical understanding of walling, to becoming familiar with the flexible nature of stone via the embodied, emotional and material interactions with stonework. In the first instance, diary extracts from participatory observation sessions provide insight into the process of establishing a discursive context of walling from which practical application can follow. In becoming familiar with the lines of force and flow in stone (Ingold 2010), diary extracts are interleaved with interviews from professional wallers to enrich the discussion with more seasoned appreciations of the craft. In the second half of the chapter, attention shifts to a comprehensive phenomenological perspective around an education of the body, mind and senses. By considering the oft-used walling phrase of ‘getting your eye in,’ the engagement of the body and mind as proposed by Merleau-Ponty (2002), Tilley (2004) and Serres (2008), is emphasised in ways that take seriously embodied craft knowledge and sensuous dispositions. When considered alongside the establishment of a high level of familiarity with the material terrain of stone (Ingold 2010; Paton 2013), an embodied and sensuous approach to craftwork suggests the development of a reflexive union between craftsperson and stone. In so doing, it is possible to unpack some of the intricacies and mysteries associated with the dry-stone craft.

Understanding Stone

This initial section is primarily concerned with the process of becoming familiar with walling practice and the ‘flexible’ properties of stone. It draws on observant participation of walling, referring directly to the learning process that I experienced in the company of other novices in our quest to understand stone. Drawing inspiration from Nigel Thrift’s (1997; 1999; 2000a; 2000b) non-representational theories, it was my intention to consider walling as a form of landscape practice, where embodied performance and affective engagements are given proper attention. As such, my intention is to avoid characterising dry-stone walling as a representation of landscape, and instead approach it as a practice through which landscape arises, and accrues meaning for human participants. At the commencement of ethnographic walling, I was alert to the embodied and emotional

registers through which I engaged with stone, and the wider environment. But early encounters also gave me cause to qualify my understanding of a non-representational approach to dry-stone walling. As novices together, TCV participants and I received training and instruction in the basics of walling from an experienced craftsman. This instruction provided a framework through which our engagement with stone could begin. It was comprised of verbal guidance, diagrammatic representation and group discussion. It therefore became evident to me the role of words and representation in the process of becoming familiar with walling practice. As novice practitioners, the diagrams and words of instruction guided and shaped initial interactions with stone. As Philo notes, we humans live amongst words:

“Words spoken – uttered, muttered, shouted, whispered; words silently mouthed... Words in sentences, words alone, words making sense, words seemingly nonsensical. Words as information, instructions, intimations; words repeating ‘facts’ and words telling ‘stories’; words as worldly reflections or words as other-worldly imaginings. Words addressed and circulated to many people; words voiced to a handful of people or just one other; words said to oneself, in one’s head and heart, with no material trace at all” (2011: 363)

It is therefore through words that I began to make sense of walling practice and become familiar with the techniques for producing a strong and secure dry-stone wall. Within this context, Lorimer’s (2005) preference for the more inclusive term of ‘more-than-representation’ (MTR) is justified. It does not preclude the influence of representational forms of knowledge, but seeks to expand into areas where life is made meaningful beyond words, and through embodied movements, affective intensities and sensuous dispositions. As such, my approach to developing a ‘sense of stone’ is respectful of the ‘representation’ and ‘more-than’ associations that make experiences meaningful. The following section explores the discursive process involved in developing dry-stone skills, and considers the role of representational forms of knowledge and communication in the study of embodied practice. I move on to suggest that discursive instruction on wall-building constructs a platform from which practical understanding of stone can follow, allowing for enhanced engagement through the body and senses, and in ways which begin to move beyond representation. In my journey of becoming familiar with walling practice, I come to regard stone, counter-intuitively and perhaps unexpectedly, as a ‘flexible’ material where embodied, material knowledge of geology, faults and points of flow, allow the skilled waller to ‘shape’ the stone to a particular purpose. In rounding off the section, attention is

paid to the temporality of learning and practice, where variations in skill as well emotional and physical energies have bearing on the perceived passage of time during wall-building.

Understanding Dry-Stone Walling Practice

The process of learning how to build a dry-stone wall must begin with a thorough understanding of various stages of construction. Although a step-by-step approach has already been provided, in practice the process is far more complex and goes beyond a basic understanding of the terminology and awareness of the building techniques.⁵⁸ According to Marchand (2008), the learning process within craftwork and other skilled activities is primarily achieved through observation, mimesis and repeated exercise. Although predominately concerned with the communication and understanding of practice without words (a dimension that will be developed in relation to dry-stone walling in subsequent sections), Marchand does not deny the importance of words in assisting the learning process:

“Words are regularly used to direct focus, coordinate activities and communicate conceptual ideas or values related to the enterprise” (Marchand 2008: 247)

The importance of discursive instruction and communication was evident in my own experience of becoming familiar with the process of dry-stone walling. With no previous practical knowledge, it allowed for the understanding of walling process within a discursive framework provided by an experienced instructor. In continued defence of the significance of words, Philo (2011) notes that though they may sometimes seem trivial, words are vital to how people negotiate interactions with each other, objects, spaces and places. In this way, words are not only reflective of the world around us, but are in part, generative of the world by entering into the processes by which humans plan, enact, and transform the world (Philo 2011). In recognition of the significance of words, this section provides insights into the role that words and discussion played during interaction with stone and understanding of walling practice. Initially based around listening and becoming familiar with instruction provided by professionals, over time the discursive framework encapsulated discussions between myself and other learners and supported the development of walling related problem-solving skills. Evidenced by a deepening awareness and knowledge of each stage in walling construction and the role of individual components in creating a strong structure, the transition between discursive understanding and practical engagement with stone began to develop ways that consolidated the basics of dry-stone walling practice.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 4: ‘Dry-Stone Techniques’ (p. 113).

In all new endeavours, a degree of written or verbal instruction is usually required to provide a contextual framework from which an individual can begin to understand the processes involved in their chosen task. Rather than overwhelming a student with too much information, an experienced and knowledgeable instructor will provide sufficient information and guidance to allow the steady development of skill over time. As the student's knowledge, confidence and familiarity with the activity grows, the instructor is able to increase the level of detail provided and in doing so, encourage further progression in the activity. This situation was experienced first-hand in becoming familiar with dry-stone walling practice, in which the instructor initially provided basic diagrammatical and verbal outlines of the activity and as understanding was developed in practice, steadily increased the level of complexity. It was the process of putting instruction into practice that further developed the knowledge and understanding of the walling process. However, along with others involved in the activity I found the transition from verbal understanding to practical application quite difficult and challenging. As shown in the following diary extract, instructions often had to be repeated, or clarified at different stages of the activity:

During building, David reminded us that it was not good practice to put pieces of stone lengthways into the wall as it would prise the stones apart and therefore weaken it. This happened many times and he had to keep reminding us. (Diary Entry, 18th April 2012)

In the early stages of learning the basics of walling practice, supervision and repetition of instructions were extremely important in order to consolidate our practical understanding. The manner with which the instructor provided guidance and advice was also significant in the learning process; criticisms were always provided in a positive and constructive way, often under the guise of a suggestion of an alternative way of working. Within this supportive and knowledgeable framework, my fellow participants and I were slowly able to develop our skills, to a point where we became less reliant upon our instructor. The ability to work independently was tested early in our learning process, when our instructor was absent for part of a wall-building session. Although initially unsure of our knowledge and ability to work alone, it soon became apparent that this unexpected situation was a useful challenge, allowing us to put our knowledge to the test and into practice without first seeking assistance. We were surprised by good progress and the speed of construction. One of the participants suggested that we were engaged in a more fluid pattern of work, and were not being halted by instructor-David for words of instruction or advice. The situation also acted as an opportunity to discuss the walling process with other participants and so share in our combined knowledge and understanding. The following

extract is an example of an instance when we repeated instructions previously provided by David in order to help each other through difficult or challenging moments:

*Angela said she remembered some things that David had taught us: One; not to have a stone that slopes outwards as it can be difficult to build upon, and two; not picking up every stone around and seeing which fit best. She said he told her to **look** at the shape of the space and try and find a stone to suit it. And as if to demonstrate, she did just that and the first stone she picked up fit perfectly. (Original emphasis) (Diary Entry, 2nd April 2013)*

The repetition of David's instructions in relation to a particular problem was also notable for demonstrating our understanding of the situation. Knowledge and understanding of other aspects of wall building was consolidated during further discussion regarding the importance of securely laid stones:

I also said that it was clear just how much the stones fit neatly together; when you moved one stone and others began to wobble it was clear how much everything was made to slot together. (Diary Entry, 2nd April 2013)

This practical appreciation of the importance of stone placement within a wall is further evidence of how we came to understand how individual components work together to affect the strength of a wall. A similar point was noted in an interview with a professional waller in which he encouraged his students to look at the stones within old collapsed walls to try and figure out what had caused them to collapse. By working out the reasons for why a wall might fail, it is then possible to develop an understanding of how every carefully placed stone works together to produce a strong and durable wall.

“One of the things I do when I'm teaching is to say to try and work out why the wall has fallen down. And you can usually tell whether it was poor stone, the building was bad, or if some features, like rabbits working underneath, or the foundations hadn't been good enough. So by working out what's wrong with an old wall, you can tell what's likely to fail.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

In the process of becoming familiar with basic aspects of walling and being able to see how they relate to the overall strength of the structure, confidence in our knowledge and ability increased. Although there remained many moments of frustration, confusion and despair, elements of calm began to filter through the group.⁵⁹ These periods of reduced

⁵⁹ See subsequent section 'Walling as Flow' (p. 217) for further interpretations of calm work.

tension seemed to correlate with an understanding and acceptance of the instructions and were sometimes marked by someone humming or singing to themselves. When I drew attention to one such moment, one of the participants described it as:

Relaxing into the work and accepting that not everything can be perfect, so we should stop trying to make it that way and just go with what we are given. (Diary Entry 2nd April 2013)

By ‘relaxing into the work’ and accepting the imperfection of the materials and the process, a degree of confidence and faith in the ability to work with stone was apparent. As confidence increased, we were able to challenge ourselves by attempting to solve problems independently, rather than referring to the instructor for assistance. Independent problem solving is a further example of how we students had become familiar with instruction and advice and were able to apply it within a practical framework. It also suggests that the previously noted ‘difficult’ transition from verbal understanding to practical application might be better understood incrementally, with small steps and new challenges encountered which once surpassed, allow a student to become more comfortable and fluid with the activity. The extract below provides an example of an occasion when two walling apprentices and I worked together on a particularly challenging part of wall. It describes the shared sense of engagement felt when the problem was being discussed and helps illustrate the benefits of teamwork in encountering difficult tasks.

Near the end of the day Chris, Kyle and I worked together to solve a stone problem. It was sloping outward which caused the stones above to slip and wobble precariously. We could not build on those until they were steady. We decided that taking the stone out was not an option as it would affect too many others. We then decided to build the slope up with smaller pieces and build on top of it. Eventually, after around 30 minutes of head-scratching and passing around of stones we had something that could be built upon. During that time the three of us were locked within the problem and shared a vision of seeing that problem solved. I don't recall what was going on around me at that time because I was so involved. It really did help to have others to discuss it with and made for a particularly good shared sense of achievement when we found something that worked. (Diary Entry, 7th November 2012)

The problem solving aspect of walling was also described by a professional waller in relation to the sense of satisfaction felt when a solution is found. However during the search for a solution, there are a significant number of challenges to overcome, some of

which may result in various degrees of frustration prior to the relief felt upon completion. In respect of these emotions, Gauntlett (2011) regards creativity and the act of making as a process of discovery and emphasises the role played by feelings of joy and accomplishment in encouraging the practitioner to continue. After discussing the problem solving process with a professional, I came to reflect on how creative engagement with a problem is also about being willing to make mistakes and subsequently acknowledge them in a way which is conducive to further learning. The following extract outlines my thinking at the time:

One waller told me that it is like problem solving, every stone is a problem to be solved and it is the wallers job to do this. I suppose that is the nature of doing something creative, sometimes you feel at the first hurdle you might not get anything done. It is about solving problems, about being engaged with the materials and just trying. You've got to be willing to make mistakes before you get any better otherwise you won't learn. (Diary Entry, 6th July 2013)

For me, creative engagement and problem solving was also to do with asking questions of the stones and thinking critically about the instructions that had been provided. This is not to say that I sought to judge the validity of the instruction, but rather consider them from my own perspective and re-structure them within a framework that improved my understanding. For example, I figured myself in a dialogue with the stones where I thought about the position where they would be 'happiest' and most secure and in so doing, allowed myself to 'discuss' all of the factors involved in creating a sound structure. This method also encouraged me to think ahead to subsequent steps in the walling process, a technique which both David and other professional wallers told me was extremely important. Thinking ahead demonstrates an understanding and awareness of the multiple components of the building process. Awareness of the multiple components within the building process might thus be considered a relational understanding of materials, where practical knowledge is based upon an appreciation of how each stone contributes to the strength and durability of the wall.

To provide us with a suitable platform upon which to develop a practical understanding, the construction of a discursive framework in the first instance was extremely important. Words of instruction uttered, repeated and rephrased by David were fundamental in guiding our initial interactions with stone. Once the foundations and key techniques of walling practice were understood, it was then possible for me and other participants to discuss, critique and make sense of this knowledge in relation to the physical handling of

stones. Talk, both to ourselves and with others, was therefore a significant learning tool in our early engagement with walling. It is evidence supportive of Philo's claim that we "live amongst words" (2011: 363) and those words, whether spoken, written or thought, trivial or serious, continue to matter, even in studies of performance and practice. That said, however, as our understanding of the discursive instructions improved, so too did confidence in embodied engagement with stone. Movements no longer became wholly framed by words of instruction, but were guided by increasing familiarity with stone and its material properties.

Developing Familiarity with Stone

My use of the concept of familiarity is informed by David Paton's (2013) material engagements with Cornish granite during a period of auto-ethnographic research at a quarry in Cornwall. In his paper he traces his progress in becoming familiar with the quarry as place, but also the material exchange and familiarity developed in working with stone. Paton understands familiarity as a "honed material exchange" (2013: 1076), one that can be regarded as a relationship between material and maker. Over time, this relationship allows for a greater depth of understanding between person and matter, and in Paton's words, "is not about the imposition of one material onto another, but a growing exchange of material properties that form unique yet constellated relations" (2013: 1077). In terms of the scope afforded by the material, and as familiarity is developed, Paton sees the stone becoming more flexible in its bounded form. In terms of walling, this idea of flexibility is demonstrated when the waller comes to know, in an embodied sense, how stone might be used, or in the case of using a hammer, how a stone can be modified to serve a specific purpose within the wall. For me, the potential flexibility of a particular stone is encapsulated in the degree with which the waller is familiar with both the walling process and the various material properties of the stone. The waller must understand, in practice, how the material properties work to create a strong and durable wall. This not only exists as discursive knowledge, from which the waller is able to provide advice and instruction to novices like myself, it is information which has been developed practically, through the body, allowing the craftsman to become familiar with how stone responds to their actions. No doubt the outcome of a wealth of experience, evidence of this sort of accumulated wisdom was predominately found in discussions with professional wallers. There were moments however, when I and other hobbyists began to consider the stone and its properties as 'flexible'. Subsequent examples are drawn from those occasions and better illustrate the steps taken in becoming familiar with stone and its malleable properties.

In discussions with professional wallers, several individuals spoke of the importance of having respect and appreciation for the process of working with stone. This was further clarified as a way of working *with* stone, rather than against it. For some individuals, ‘working with what you’ve got,’ seemed to epitomise the skill and nature of walling itself:

“You have to build with what you’ve got basically and that’s the skill of dry-stone walling, so I suppose there’s no such thing as easy stone and difficult stone, you’ve just got to work with it. You just have hang in there and get it done.” (Edward, 24th January 2013)

“My view is that the dyker should first of all use the stone as you find it and not to bash it into small pieces to try and fit a space, the art of it and craft of it is selecting a stone to fit the space required.” (Adam, 15th January 2013)

Indeed, there is a strong tradition associated with working with whatever material is locally available; historically wallers and dykers working on field or enclosure walls had little control over the type of stone they were able to use with most sourced from nearby quarries (BTCV 1986). Efficiency and economy of work was a similar trait of walling in the past, meaning there was little time dedicated to the shaping or knapping of stone. There was also little need to shape the stone into a more precise dimension; in contrast to the neater, more decorative contemporary walls found in private gardens, historic field walls were of a rustic nature that were primarily based on their durability and functionality. Many of these historical approaches to walling remain with professionals today, regardless of whether they build decorative or field walls. It was also implied that walling represented a less aggressive method of engaging with stone than a comparable activity like masonry, often requiring stone to be chiselled into a desired shape. One professional reflected on how he believed some people were guilty of ‘bullying’ or over-working the stone, particularly in relation to the construction of unusual dry-stone structures. It was said that these individuals did not know how to look at a stone and think about how it could fit and instead, by way of using a hammer, attempted to make the stone fit by knapping it into the required shape. This bullying aspect was also mentioned by the same professional in relation to the oft-used quote of ‘a good waller never puts a stone down.’ It was suggested that this quote was frequently used within the wrong context and implied that in order to be a good waller, once a stone is picked up a waller must make it fit within the wall. An alternative reading of the quote was proposed: namely that a good waller would always pick up the *correct* stone, meaning the waller was so familiar with the stone that it was chosen in the knowledge that it would fit comfortably in the wall with little need

for adjustment. Whilst it is difficult to determine the original context and therefore true meaning of this phrase, it demonstrates the different approaches that may be taken in relation to the stone used within walling. For many of those interviewed, a walling hammer was regarded as a useful tool to be used sparingly, perhaps to knock off unruly and potentially weak corners of stone. However overuse of a hammer or chisel was frowned upon, for reasons that appeared to take the skill of walling further away from its historical beginnings, and into the realms of masonry work. In a series of letters submitted to *The Waller and Dyker* magazine⁶⁰ in 2013, it was asserted that the type of stone provided for some examinations was regarded by the DSWA Craft Skills Group and DSWA Trustee Board as unsuitable due to its brick-like appearance. It was suggested that the use of the neat sawn and dressed stone on examinations was not a true test of dry-stone walling skill and risked “moving the craft towards stone masonry” (Loudon 2013a: 13). In the same article, it was noted that the excessive use of hammers and over-working of stone diminishes the skill of the dry-stone craftsman and their use was therefore discouraged by the DSWA. In a subsequent article it was noted that such viewpoints stimulated a great deal of comment and support from the walling community (Loudon 2013b: 19).

On a similar note it was also suggested that to work with stone was also to work with nature and all of its difficulties and imperfections. During a walling session in which I participated with other novice wallers, it was suggested by one participant that, “you cannot force nature; you have to go along with it” (*Kathy, 2nd April 2013*). This statement directly challenges Western discourse where nature is often positioned in opposition to society and culture, and thought of as something that can be controlled and dominated by technology (Ingold 2000). As Ingold goes on to explain, this is evident in 18th and 19th century studies by evolutionary anthropologists where it was thought that more ‘civilised’ societies possessing complex technology demonstrated high levels of control over nature, whilst ‘primitive’ societies, with simple technologies, had little mastery over nature. Elements of this belief remain in contemporary thought, embodied in the concept of technology where “things are constituted in the rational and rule-governed transposition of preconceived form onto inert substance” (Ingold 2010: 93). In opposition to the statement made by the aforementioned participant that ‘nature cannot be forced’, modern technological approaches to art and construction seek to do exactly that by imposing ‘inert’ matter with preconceived designs. Ingold (2010) recognises this as a ‘hylomorphic’ model, after Aristotle. It is a construction, he contends, that to create anything one must

⁶⁰ *The Waller and Dyker* magazine is the official magazine of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain.

bring together form (morphe) and matter (hyle). This approach became firmly entrenched within Western thought and exaggerated in terms of the dominance and mastery of form over matter. However with regard to practitioners involved in wall-building, it is suggested that to produce quality work, the craftsman is required to work *with* stone and thus also, nature. As exemplified by the quote below, this link between stone and nature was made in conversation with a professional waller about the difficulties of teaching, and learning, walling:

“[I was] teaching somebody last week there, a young lad, but he had a hard job understanding a stone in itself and how it lends itself and how Mother Nature lends itself to doing what we wished it to do, which is build walls. It’s not come off a production line, not all stones are 9 inches long and 3 inches deep and 4 inches wide, they’re all misshapen and you’ve got to use your own initiative and skill to see the better sides of it all to make it work for you.” (Archie, 14th December 2012)

It is therefore not brute force, or a powerful hammer-swing, which produces a good wall, but an understanding of stone ‘in itself’ and recognising how matter (and nature) can be complicit in form and design. An understanding of the faults and flaws of a stone was noted by another professional as key identifiers to how stony matter informs function:

“And there is something about stone that you’ve got to change the way you think about it when you become a waller. Because you see stone differently, most people just see it as a piece of stone, but when you wall you actually look at the faults and flaws in it to see how you can use it or you won’t use it. There is a whole load of ways that you can look at stone.” (Ian, 12th December 2012)

This waller emphasises how a different way of looking and interpreting stone is essential for building. By recognising a fault or flaw, the experienced waller is, according to Ingold, following the “lines of flow” (2010: 91) within the stone and being guided by its forces. In following the lines of flow, Ingold rejects the hylomorphic model and instead focuses on tactile and sensuous knowledge, used by builders, artists, craftspeople and various other practitioners, to guide them through the terrain of a material. He describes this as being attuned to the ‘textility of making’, where attention is paid to the process of creation, as opposed to that of the final object. This point is crucial in Ingold’s argument, and indeed discussions within this chapter, for he believes that attempts to re-animate the world have already been rendered life-less through the excessive and erroneous focus placed on “objectness of things” (2010: 97). Rather, it is suggested that to restore life to the world, we must concentrate on the *becoming* of and “form-giving” (2010: 97) of things. As a

result, attention is paid to what people do *with* materials, how they follow them and “weave their own lines of becoming into the texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld” (2010: 96). In accordance with Ingold’s suggestion, I extend this kind of awareness to the dry-stone waller, who in the process of becoming familiar with stone and by following the lines of flow, begins to recognise its potential as a flexible material.

The process of becoming familiar with stone and its flexibility is also based around an understanding of the wider aspects of geology and rock formation. Dry-stone walls provide a good introduction to local geology and give expression to the material that lies beneath them (BTCV 1986). Professional wallers in Britain need not travel far to encounter different types of stone and therefore must develop an understanding of their properties and how this might inform how the stone is used. Throughout interviews with professionals, it became clear that wallers were indeed extremely knowledgeable about British geology, in a way that might characterise them as ‘amateur geologists.’ Knowledge was most commonly acquired in practice and understood in relation to how different stones could be used within the wall. In discussing geology during interviews, many individuals were confident in describing stone types more broadly, for example distinguishing between the main types of sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic rocks, but found it difficult to identify more specific types. The following quote provides a notable example of this:

“I’m not a geologist, I’m just, I just like stone. I know if it’s either a sedimentary stone or a whinstone but I can’t...I couldn’t define into the different classes of dolerites and schists, I just know the basic ones and how they react and how you can build with them.” (Brian, 17th December 2012)

This quote also makes clear the basis from which wallers come to understand differences in geology; how stones react and how it is possible to build with them. Some types of stone may be harder than others and so prevent any shaping with a hammer or irregular in shape and cause difficulty in producing a neatly coursed wall. For example, the irregularity of a particular type of granite from Aberdeenshire caused significant difficulties for me during participative work. A diary extract illustrates how the angular nature of the stone made it difficult to use:

Many of the stones were oddly shaped and we therefore struggled to find suitable places for them. Many were quite triangular in shape and although they sat nicely on the base, they had ridges along the top that made it difficult to build upon when it came to putting on the next course of stones. We talked amongst ourselves about

how tricky the angular granite was but agreed we had to make the best of it. (Diary Entry, 21st May 2013)

For this type of stone, the size and corresponding density also made the work more challenging. Problematic lumps, nodules or corners were extremely difficult to remove and on the few occasions when a hammer was used, the stone rarely split in the preferred way (see Figure 6-1). Having significant experience with this type of stone, our instructor was aware of the difficulties and as was noted in the above extract, encouraged us to accept the stone and ‘make the best of it’. In addition to Ingold, the force and vitality of matter is a concern for political theorist Jane Bennett. In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Bennett calls for a re-thinking of the ways in which humans conceptualise matter. She suggests that in order to address political and environmental challenges, we must recognise the vitality and agency of materials, not only to “impede or block the will and design of humans, but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own” (2010: viii). When applied to stone and walling practice, many experienced wallers *do* recognise and respect these forces, some of which make work with stone easier or more challenging. In the case of the piece of granite as shown in Figure 6-1, its irregular shape, with awkward lumps and nodules, was especially difficult for novice wallers like myself to visualise how it might be used within the wall. With a different stone type, such as softer sandstone, it may have been possible to alter the shape by chipping parts away with a hammer, however the high density of this particular granite prevented such an option. Therefore the properties of the granite – irregular shape and high density – are regarded as components in the stone’s vital materiality, where the practice of the waller must change in response to those qualities. In addition, wallers are aware that the vitality of material varies geographically between stone type and mineral components:

“On Lewis the local stone was either Lewisian gneiss or granite so very, very hard rocks, usually pretty irregular in shape, so you kind of have to improvise and make the best of it really. On Skye the kind of basalt rock is one of two things, it’s either very crumbly, so it’s not much use at all, or it’s extremely hard and dense. So the hammer tends to bounce off it. The rock [on Skye] is probably tougher than the rock in Lewis. An examiner once told me if you can work with this then you can work with anything.” (Terry, 16th January 2013)

In the following example, the waller similarly discusses the challenges presented by various stone types but also remarks on how some qualities of stone, such as size and

weight, may, for some individuals, produce feelings of satisfaction and achievement when used appropriately:

“I think each stone type and variety presents its own challenges... I think general limestone and sandstone, easy to work with, the harder stone, volcanic stuff, much more difficult. And in the West of Scotland we use what they colloquially call whinstone which is dolerite, a volcanic rock which is very difficult to work but there is huge satisfaction in using it because it is heavy and when a stone clunks in a wall and it doesn't move, you think well that's great! In a perverse sort of way people feel very comfortable with it. So I think stone types do present difficulties initially, but then after...a day, people get very used to the stone type, if they are used to dry-stone walling.” (Edward, 24th January 2013)

Both quotes indicate how wallers come to be familiar with geology and its vitality, as characterised by whether it is considered straightforward or challenging to use. As such, the vitality of the stone cannot be changed or altered, the craftsperson must accept (and respect) these qualities and ‘make the best of it.’



**Figure 6-1: A large, irregular piece of granite which resisted the force of the hammer.
(Photo by author.)**

Earlier it was noted that excessive use of the hammer in shaping stone is likely to draw criticism from some among the walling community. However for most professionals and experienced amateurs, the shaping of stone was necessary for some stages of walling. Drawing upon their understanding of geology and vital properties, wallers are able to shape

some types of stone into more manageable chunks. Several wallers commented on how sandstone in particular is easy to shape:

“Sandstone, just by the nature of it, you tend to shape it more.” (Colin, 29th January 2013)

“Sandstone especially, cause you can split it, if there’s any nice seams in it, you can split it to make it fit the spot perfectly.” (Nick, 9th January 2013)

Both quotes demonstrate how a familiarity with stone properties and composition can be used by the experienced waller to his or her advantage. In this way it does not suggest that the stone was ‘bullied’ into a space within the wall, but instead implies that the waller understands the vital materiality of the stone and can therefore work with these properties to create a strong structure. In other words, before effective and efficient shaping of stone can take place, the waller must be familiar with how the forces within a stone will respond to the forces of the hammer. As was suggested by an amateur waller, this familiarity is borne of repetitive embodied engagement between waller, hammer and stone. On one occasion, I was encouraged to shape some stones myself and accompanied by instruction from a professional, I was able to gain insight and begin to develop embodied knowledge of how one becomes familiar with the way stone responds to the force of a hammer.

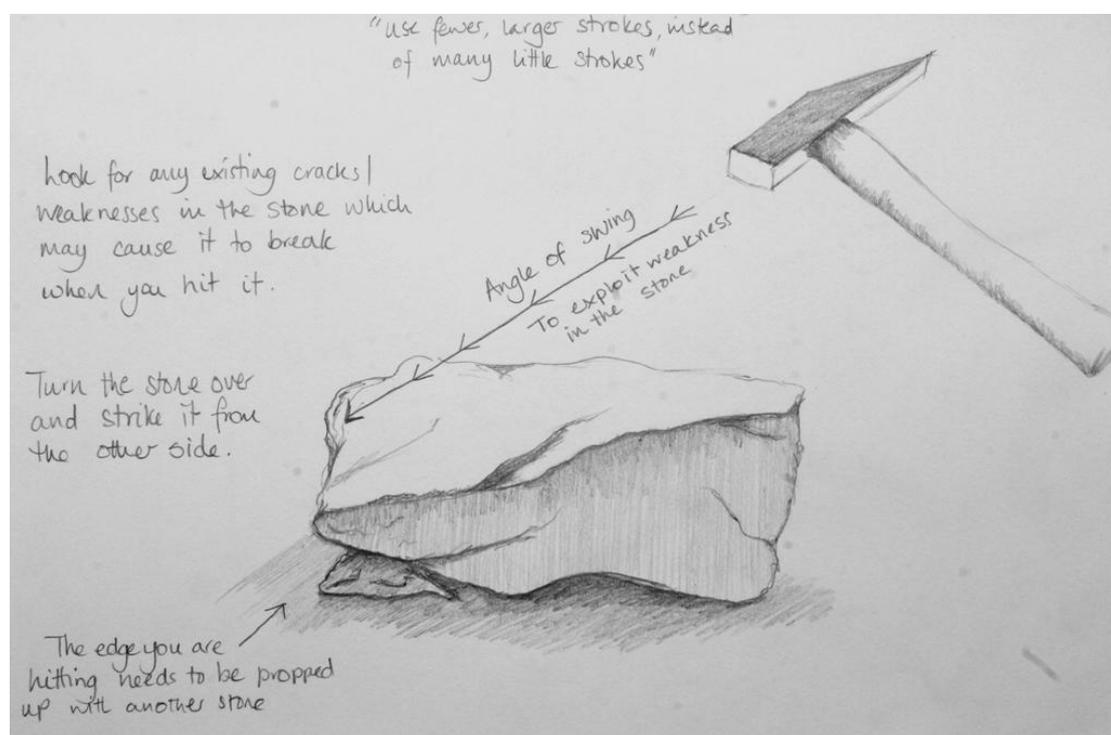


Figure 6-2: Diagrammatic representation of shaping stone, using a traditional Scottish dyking hammer (also known as a catchie hammer). (Drawing by author.)

To further consolidate my learning and help visualise this process, I created a diagrammatic sketch of my experience (Figure 6-2). However it must be noted that used in this way, a diagram or sketch may also serve a purpose beyond those associated with its creator. Writing from an architectural perspective, Manolopoulou (2005) reckons on pictorial representation in the form of diagrams or sketches as a method of communication common to various disciplines and cultures, acting as a catalyst for greater engagement between viewer and creator. Figure 6-2 positions the hammer in the control of the viewer and by way of accompanying instruction, asks the viewer to engage their imagination and participate in the shaping of the stone. As Manolopoulou also notes, being a type of representation, the diagram allows for critical engagement and multiple interpretations. A viewer may question the diagram and become curious about aspects of the activity that exist beyond the text or sketch. For example, the instruction to use “fewer larger strokes instead of many smaller strokes,” arose due to my initial attempts at swinging the hammer being hindered by its surprising weight. In an effort to maintain control, I favoured numerous, shorter swings. However once I had become familiar with the weight of the tool, it became easier to control and following instruction from an experienced waller, began to increase the size of my swing. The greater swing exerted more power and, provided my aim was accurate, was extremely effective at splitting the stone. Also noted in the diagram, is the intention to identify and exploit weakness in the stone by directing swings to encourage the stone to break along cracks or seams. This is yet further evidence of the importance of developing familiarity with various types of stone and its vitality. Following Ingold, a point of weakness, such as a crack or cleavage plane, would be considered a ‘line of flow’ within the texture of the material, in which a waller “intervenes” and is able to “follow its course while bending it to their evolving purpose” (2010: 92). To intervene in the texture of the material, the practitioner must also become familiar with the physicality of the walling hammer and combined with knowledge of the strength and weaknesses of particular stones, understand how the weight and force of the hammer can be yielded to produce a quality building stone. The following extract shows how a specially made walling hammer and knowledge of its functionality can be used to great effect:

“A walling hammer is slightly tapered on one end, a bit like a blunt axe. There’s a bit of weight on it, so if you can imagine it, you’ve got a bit of stone and the weight will split it on the grain. A bricklaying hammer can sometimes do the same, but it’s a wee bit more fragile. It wears down quicker, whereas a stone hammer doesn’t.”
(Alex, 16th January 2013)

While attending Penrith Agricultural Show, I observed the hammer in use during competition. There were sixteen competitors in attendance, among whom six were experienced wallers competing in the veteran and professional classes. Two types of stone were being used, sandstone and limestone, which being low-density sedimentary stone, meant that shaping was relatively straightforward. Observing competitors over much of the day, I saw that the experienced wallers used their hammers far more than those competing in the amateur and novice classes. Experienced craftspeople will have a greater understanding of how the stone will break and respond to force, but they are also able to work extremely efficiently, an embodied skill that is very important in timed competitions. I observed that shaping techniques varied according to the size and shape of the stone. Smaller stones were held close to the body while the waller chipped away at the surface (Figure 6-3). Larger, more awkwardly shaped pieces were placed on the ground where more powerful swings could be used (Figure 6-4). The type of hammer being used also differed between the competitors, demonstrating the variation in personal preference. Some used variations on a catchie walling hammer (as depicted in Figure 6-2) whilst others, including professionals and those shown in Figure 6-3 and Figure 6-4, used brick-laying hammers.

As mentioned previously, becoming familiar with variations in geology, the vitality of stony material and walling tools is borne of repetition and a desire to understand how the stone reacts in different situations. However there is scope for developing the concept of familiarity further. During in-depth discussions with practitioners about how they came to know and understand stone, several wallers aligned their interaction with the vital properties of stone as a form of discursive engagement. They noted how contrary to their own intentions, the vitality of stone dictates the design, style and overall look of the finished wall:

“When you come into a job with a different kind of stone it usually takes you a day, two days to get used to what the stone looks and feels like and how it goes together, how much you can shape it, how much you can hit it with a hammer, how much you can use a chisel on it and how it fits together.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

“The stone very much dictates the design and style of what you’re doing. Even a repair on the wall, you have so much stone, there are big ones, good ones, bad ones, there is a little bit of planning, there is a grand theme, but mostly the stones will dictate what it is going to look like.” (Tom, 12th December 2012)

Awareness of the vitality of stones to influence wall construction requires not only a high degree of familiarity with the material, but also a level of acceptance and receptiveness to the will of the material. Though Ingold and Bennett do not always agree on the exact meaning and application of the terms materiality and agency, both are attuned to the forces inherent within matter and thus equally relevant to the study of stone. Ingold (2010) however, pays particular attention to a material's process of becoming, described by him as the textility of making. Therefore in the context of walling practitioners, engaged in developing a sense of stone and its vitality, Ingold's concept is particularly relevant and chimes easily with the ways in which wallers follow lines of flow within stone, allowing them to guide construction. The following extract is an example of one waller's interpretation of the flows and forces within the various walling components:

*“Walls **dictate** to you how they are going to be built, you can go into a site and look at it and **say** I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that, but if you start building a wall, the wall will **tell** you how it wants to be built, it sounds silly, I can't really elaborate on that anymore, you think yes I'm going to put a nice stone down here and it's going to look beautiful, but by the time you are finished, it looks completely different. The ground **tells** you how you're going to lay your foundations, the type of stone **tells** you how it's going to sit in the wall, so the stone and the ground **dictate** to you a lot of the time, how your end results are going to be.” (Own emphasis)
(Brian, 17th December 2012)*

The discursive language appearing in the quote indicates the waller's receptiveness to the stone as well as an understanding of knowledge being shared. Figured metaphorically, this kind of engagement might indicate the existence of a sensual, embodied conversation between waller and stone. This sense of receptive communication implies a positive and productive relationship between waller and stone, seeking to 'make the best' of the materials available. Indeed a lack of communication was referred to by a novice waller as the reason for why work was not progressing in the way she anticipated. When confronted with a difficult section of wall, she informed me that, “she and the stones were not communicating,” (*Diary Entry, 2nd April 2013*) implying that a breakdown in creative exchange was responsible for the problematic situation. Being a novice, it is likely that she was not fluent or suitably familiar with the flows and forces and therefore had difficulty engaging in a conversation with the stone.



Figure 6-3: Shaping of stone; held close to the body. (Photo by author).



Figure 6-4: Shaping of stone; positioned on the ground. (Photo by author.)

Temporality of Learning

The passage of time and an awareness of the temporality of practice is extremely relevant to the learning, understanding and overall experience of dry-stone walling.⁶¹ In Chapters 4 and 5, I drew attention to Ingold's (2000) notion of the taskscape as a way of conceptualising embodied landscape practice. I suggested that within this framework, embodied practices like dry-stone walling, are woven into the texture of the earth. In this section, I explore embodied tasks in greater detail, principally with reference to the temporality of practice and how it is vital in becoming familiar with skill and stone, but also how on occasion, the experience of time restricts the development of embodied knowledge. Fundamental to Ingold's concept of the taskscape is the temporal nature of living and dwelling:

“In dwelling in the world, we do not act *upon* it, or do things *to* it; rather we move along *with* it. Our actions do not transform the world, they are part and parcel of the world's transforming itself. And that is just another way of saying that they belong to time” (Ingold 2000: 200, original emphasis).

This extract also emphasises the embodied experience of time, where acts of landscaping are “part and parcel” of the worlds' transformation. However the relationship between time and embodied acts of landscaping, such as walling, is not straightforward, or chronological. Time allows for the development and honing of skills, but can also be restrictive. As an example, many participant observation sessions took place over a period of two days, often with an interval of a month or more elapsing between subsequent sessions, meaning that the second day came to an end at the moment when a sense emerged of having just started to become familiar with the work. Conversely, time was also said to have a restorative effect, evidenced by the importance of ‘taking a break’ when challenges became too difficult to overcome. These examples therefore demonstrate how the temporality of experience influences the process of becoming familiar with stone and walling practice. Patience throughout the learning process was often noted by professionals to be one of the key virtues of a good waller. Efficiency is also considered to be a valued trait and it appears that patience and efficiency can be complementary. In the following extract, a professional waller tells a story of trying to impress another well-respected professional, in the hopes of securing a job. The extract makes clear that patience, combined with an efficient method of working, provides the best results:

⁶¹ See further reference to the passage of time in the subsequent section: ‘Walling as Flow’ (p. 217).

“I was rushing about like a blue-arsed fly trying to impress him and he was just scuffing his feet and whistling, and not making any rush to get stones on the wall. He was like, just take your time, if you can’t find the stone now you’ll find it soon enough, don’t rush. And he ended up building more wall than I did. And it was quite incredible, as much as I pushed myself to put stones in the wall to show that I was doing my day’s work and I was worthy of employing, he wasn’t really bothered with that, he was just bothered about making a good wall, and [saying] ‘we need a fancy stone for that, or look at that, that’s a bad bit there, we need a good stone for that’ and he would stand back and you could see him sort of pondering, looking, and he would go to the other end of the pile and pick another stone that would fit that space. It was quite remarkable and I’ve now got that knack too. I can see anxiety in somebody that’s just started the job and see them trying to prove the same things I was trying to prove. I ended up discovering that over a course of time all that will come to you but it’ll not happen today, you know.” (Archie, 14th December 2012)

It would seem that a waller’s skill and degree to which they are familiar with stone is also dependent upon a level of patience with which they approach the work. Arguably, all types of craftwork and many other valuable skills besides require a great deal of patience and commitment if one is to become truly knowledgeable. Indeed, the final line of the quote above refers to the development of familiarity “over a course of time.” Several professionals noted that this could take many months or even years to achieve:

“If you’ve got a good eye for it, within two or three years you’ll know if you’re good at it.” (Gareth, 29th January 2013)

“Once you’ve worked with stone for a few years you can quickly recognise what is going to go where – just like a big jig-saw puzzle.” (Stuart, 24th January 2013)

“After, I would say, 6 months or so or a season, our folks would have developed an eye.” (Edward, 24th January 2013)

These long timescales are, of course, based upon periods of sustained engagement with stone and regular instruction from experienced wallers. There was also an implication that no matter the experience level of the practitioner, there would always be the opportunity for further learning and development. One professional told me that, “the day you stop learning is the day that you should give up,” (Ian, 12th December 2012) a phrase which although applicable to any skill or learning experience, nonetheless demonstrates the individuals own passion for the work, but also the depth and wealth of familiarity to be

achieved from working with stone. This was also related to the ornamental aspect of walling, where the basics may take a short period of time to master, but the creative dimension will take many years more:

“It’s quite a simple technique that you can learn in two days...you can do the job in two days but to do the art form you need about forty years.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

These long timescales allow familiarity with stone and the thorough understanding of dry-stone walling practice to be built up slowly over time and in accordance with the commitment shown by the practitioner. However this process of slow-learning became problematic during participatory observation sessions where courses lasted two days; a timescale that was suitable for many practical reasons. As beginners to walling, along with other participants I often felt that two days was an insufficient period of time in which to become familiar with the process and we frequently finished the second day with a sense of having ‘just got into the swing of things’. As a result, time felt restrictive, especially as there were often periods of several months separating follow-up sessions. Our learning therefore felt a little fragmented and somewhat repetitive as we began each new session having to refresh skills we had developed during the previous session. Below are two diary extracts about my own difficulties in settling back into walling after a significant break:

When I arrived I saw it was only a small group working today. I said hello to everyone and asked Mark if I could borrow a pair of gloves. Then I got to work. Or tried to get to work – I was at a bit of a loss as what to do actually. I definitely knew what professionals meant by it taking a few days to get your head back into walling mode. Trouble was our walling sessions only lasted a couple of days. (Diary Entry, 2nd April 2013)

Yet again on the first day I struggled with building. I know it shouldn’t worry me as I have heard many experienced wallers tell me that it sometimes takes them half a day or even a full day to get their head into it after a break. (Diary Entry, 7th July 2013)

In both extracts I refer to the advice given by professionals that following a break of several weeks or more, it often takes time to once again become familiar and fluent in walling. This situation was also noted when moving between different stone types since as described earlier, each stone presents its own challenges and is understood in relation to

their specific properties. In light of this advice and my own limited experience of walling, it is therefore unsurprising that I found it difficult to return to walling after a break.

However despite my own desire to ‘pick up from where I left off,’ slow-learning was in no way discouraged during the sessions. There was ample time for becoming familiar with stone at a preferred pace. I soon came to realise that for me and another participant, the preferred pace of work was rather slow, owing to a high degree of our time spent thinking.

‘Embodied thinking time’ was characterised by silent engagement with the stone as I turned it around in my hands or experimented with different positions within the wall. In becoming aware of these periods of embodied thinking, I then became concerned with how best they could be explained and documented. I discussed this with another practitioner who suggested representing the thought process through diagram and text, however as I considered it further, I realised there was very little internal ‘discussion’ during these situations:

I don't exactly "talk" about the stone or the space in my head...at least not in a discursive way. I do it visually and through touch. My hands feel the contours of the stone while my eyes measure and evaluate it. My brain then tries to figure out whether it will be appropriate for the space. Although I just described this as a staged process, it's not quite like that, it's as if everything happens at the same time – your head, hands and eyes are all in a continuous conference call with the stone. (Diary Entry, 23rd May 2013)

As evidenced by this attempt to articulate the ‘thinking’ process, it became clear that I no longer considered my embodied actions prior to their execution. This is in contrast to the earlier accounts that saw me discursively speaking to myself and to others, about the walling process and corresponding movements. For Thrift (1997), this is the ‘still point’, when representation stops or ceases to matter. He selects dance as an illustrative example, however Philo (2011) notes that the point at which thought and words are stilled is evident in most, if not all, human activities. Philo suggests that the ‘still point’ is evidence that we are “*not* functioning reflexively, knowingly or self-consciously with an implied chronology whereby, first, we ‘think’ (or speak to our self) the nature of the act to be undertaken before, second, we perform the act” (2011: 9). Though it appeared to be the case in the early stages of becoming familiar with walling practice that my embodied actions were being framed and guided by words, I suggest here that discursive thought was the medium through which I *made sense* of embodied engagement. To elaborate, Philo refers us to Harrison’s (2000) suggestion that words, and our ability to articulate the nature of the

activity, are always racing to catch up, even if only by fractions of seconds. As such, ‘making sense’ of embodied skills will always take place after the event and is ultimately limited to representational narratives. However, in light of the constraints made by representational forms of communication, it stands to reason that there are additional knowledges of which the mind cannot ‘make sense’. As Thrift suggests, it is important that in studies of practice, we take notice of the various ways in which knowledge is produced:

“When we say that human beings act to think or that they learn by doing, we need to refigure what we count as thought and knowledge” (2000b: 36-37)

Philo observes that even within highly skilled human activities, there remains an embodied element, closely aligned to instinct, which positions us as part of nature and irrespective of “post-hoc intellectualizations” (2011: 10), determines what we do and how we do it. In the next section, I consider embodied knowledge and the aspects of walling practice that go beyond discursive representation.

Embodiment and Emotions in Walling Practice

In the previous section, my consideration of becoming familiar with stone was based on examples of “honed material exchange” (Paton 2013: 1076), where over time, the waller becomes aware of the vital properties of stone and how they can be used effectively within a wall. Such awareness is dependent upon repetitive practice, a thorough understanding of the structure of a wall and a working knowledge of stone type and geology. However, as noted, the practice of becoming familiar with stone and walling also involves an education of the body, mind and senses. Wallers often speak of ‘getting an eye’ into the stone, a process understood as a metaphor for the engagement of the body and senses within the practice of building a wall. This perspective is aligned with the theories of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002), and a rejection of the dualism of mind and body, seeking instead to understand the world through direct embodied engagement. In this section, my discussion is framed by an approach to phenomenology set amidst embodied experience. To fully invite this engagement of body and mind, the emotional dimension of walling practice is also considered. As Davidson and Milligan suggest, body and emotions are fundamentally linked:

“Our first and foremost, most immediate and intimately felt geography is the body, the site of emotional experience and expression par excellence. Emotions, to be sure, take place within and around this closet of spatial scales” (2004: 523)

Upon establishing a basis for understanding walling through the physical and emotional self, this section will go on to highlight aspects of walling practice in which emotional and embodied geographies are most evident. This includes understanding walling in terms of ‘flow,’ defined as an immersive physical, emotional and mental engagement with an activity; impacts upon the physicality of the body as a result of sustained practice; and finally, the mental and physical impacts of working out of doors in a range of weather conditions.

“Getting your eye in”

The process of understanding the world through the body is considered by Merleau-Ponty from the perspective of mind and body entwined and indivisible. Following Merleau-Ponty, Tilley termed this the ‘body-subject’:

“A mind physically embodied, a body and a mind which always encounters the world from a particular point of view in a particular context at a particular time and in a particular place, a physical subject in space-time” (2004: 2)

This rejection of the mind/body dualism is well supported by evidence derived from the walling scene. Personal experience of the practice shows that developing familiarity with stone and its vital materialism is firmly situated within the realm of the sensing body. Indeed the embodied aspect of walling was frequently referred to in a discursive manner; getting a *feel* for the stones (Drake 2008) or getting your *eye/hand/back* into the stones (Cairns 1986). Such metaphors are extremely common within the walling vernacular and demonstrate the importance of an engaged and receptive body. It is also important to note that although these phrases are used in reference to a particular sense, for example, sight or touch, they are not exclusive to a singular kind of interaction between body and material. As a result of my own experiences of walling as well as observing and listening to knowledgeable others, the separation for the senses, particularly sight and touch, is impossible. As an example of this, I return to a quote used in the previous section⁶² to demonstrate the challenging nature of articulating the thinking process:

I don't exactly “talk” about the stone or the space in my head...at least not in a discursive way. I do it visually and through touch. My hands feel the contours of the stone while my eyes measure and evaluate it. My brain then tries to figure out whether it will be appropriate for the space. Although I just described this as a staged process, it's not quite like that, it's as if everything happens at the same time

⁶² See previous section, ‘Temporality of Learning’ (p. 205).

– *your head, hands and eyes are all in a continuous conference call with the stone.*
(*Diary Entry, 23rd May 2013*)

In this extract I attempt to explain how I primarily used the senses of sight and touch to make sense of walling practice. In doing so however, I realised that the senses could not be separated. Head, hands and eyes, which can also be thought of as mind, body and senses, were all in constant communication. Philosopher Michel Serres believes that the blending or mingling of the senses is the primary means through which we engage with the world. In an introduction to Serres', *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*, Steven Connor notes that:

“The senses are nothing but the mixing of the body, the principal means whereby the body mingles with the world and with itself, overflows its borders” (Connor 2008: 3)

To divide the senses and consider them in singularity is in Serres' opinion, the equivalent of “tear[ing] the body to pieces” (2008: 26). Tilley (2004), another proponent of a theory of fused senses, describes the phenomenon as synaesthesia, where blending is evidential of the body's participatory relationship in the world. The inability to give words to the conversation exchange between my head, hands and eyes demonstrates the difficulty of expressing, at least on a discursive level, certain aspects of worldly experience.

Despite the limits presented by representational forms of expression, many professional wallers demonstrated an awareness of embodied engagement and referred to it in a variety of ways. The following extract is from a published text, where the professional waller and author allude to a kind of communing between mind and body:

“There is co-ordination between eyes and hand. Whenever I pick up a stone that looks to be right for a particular spot, I also sense the shape of it in my hand(s) before placing it on the wall. Often I will turn a stone round and over, using combined eye and hand to find the bed (base) and the face (front)...The eye sees the shape: the hand senses the weight” (Drake 2008: 46)

Combined with knowledge of the material properties of stone, fluency within the senses allows for a channel of communication between body and stone. Professional waller and writer Dan Snow believes that “stone speaks through the hands” (2008: xii) and it is only through the process of acquiring a ‘feel’ for the stone that the waller becomes familiar with the language. Snow understands feel to be based around knowledge of the physicality of stones that when handled for many years, allow the waller to develop an expectation of what they feel like before being touched. From a craftwork perspective, like Sennett

(2008), Snow believes that between craftsperson and chosen material, continual and multi-sensual dialogue flow. Figure 6-5 is a sketch of the interaction between a stone and the hands of an experienced waller. In watching craftspeople at work, I became fascinated with how their hands quickly moved over stones, fluently collecting information about shape, texture and weight. As such, this sketch is a musing of the interaction of hands and stone, inviting myself, as artist and practitioner, and the reader or viewer, to consider the fluent, embodied and sensual dialogue existing between waller and material.



Figure 6-5: Multi-sensual dialogue flows between the wallers hands and stone. (Drawing by author.)

The phrases ‘getting an eye in’ and ‘a feel’ for the stone were frequently used as catchall terms by professionals to refer to embodied knowledge and skill development. By questioning professional wallers on various aspects of their physical-mental engagement with walls and stone, I was able to gain some insight into the somewhat murky realm behind these terms. Broadly speaking there was a number of professional wallers who described the development of an ‘eye’ or ‘feel’ with an air of mystique. Some suggested that it was a skill that could not be taught, implying a difficulty in communicating its various dimensions:

“You can’t actually teach someone how to see stone. And there is something about stone that you’ve got to change the way you think about it when you become a waller.” (Ian, 12th December 2012)

“Having a good eye, you can’t teach that...there are people out there that are never going to get any better because basically they can’t see [the stone].” (Gareth, 29th January 2013)

The challenge associated with explaining and teaching such skills is a reminder of the more-than-representational nature of embodied actions. Though it has been shown that many theorists in geography (see Thrift 1997; 2000a; 2000b; Harrison 2000; Lorimer 2005; Philo 2011) value knowledge that cannot be represented discursively, some wallers had little patience for conceptualising walling in this way. Robert Cairns wrote, “there is nothing mysterious about it,” and that such mysteries are shared by people who pretend to have an interest in walling but spend little time engaged in the activity. Others were in similar agreement with Cairns’:

“There’s a lot of rubbish spoken in that respect.” (Paul, 10th December 2012)

“It is a skill that is easily learnt and applied, I mean it looks magical in the first instance but after two or three times you’ve been out, you’ve got the eye and the mystique disappears a bit.” (Edward, 24th January 2013)

Here it is suggested that there is little justification for the aura of mystique and complexity surrounding the ‘eye’ and as such, it is perhaps better regarded as a simple metaphor for the engagement of body, mind and stone. Regarding it in this way does little to harm the significance of the term with regards to embodied working. Indeed, many wallers were able to explain ‘the eye’ in terms of their own embodied engagement with walling:

“Katie: Getting your eye into the stone...Well I describe it as feeling the stone.

Researcher: So in that way do you think it’s more than just a visual thing?

Katie: [pause] Um, yes, yes, because you pick up every individual stone, you feel it and you know where it’s going to sit on the wall, you know you can feel if the stone is sitting there happy, you know a stone will find a happy place to sit.” (Katie, 14th January 2013)

“Getting your eye in and also getting your back in as well. Getting used to the physical side of it, it can take a couple of days getting used to it, to get the eye for the stone and physically get used to bending over and the physical lifting side of it.” (Frank, 14th December 2012)

These examples further support Sennett's (2008) argument for a multi-sensual approach to skilled work. Particularly within the first example, it is interesting to note the emotional exchange between waller and stone. In finding a 'happy' place for the stone to sit, the waller is similarly satisfied with its position, demonstrating the capacity for emotional engagement with the activity. Others refer to the process in a more technical way, by explaining how the 'eye' might be used to identify and evaluate the physical characteristics of a stone:

"Getting your eye in to the stone, getting your head into it, understanding the way...If I pick up a stone here every stone has a side that lends itself to the batter of a wall and once you see that, once you pick up a stone, as awkward as it might look, there's always a side that will be slightly better than the rest." (Archie, 14th December 2012)

"You pick up the right stone, you recognise the size and shape of it and what it's there for and so you tend to look at a heap of stones and you say, that's a foundation stone and that's a coping stone, these sort of things, you recognise them and sort them out and your more liable to pick up the correct stone for the bit you're looking for than before your eye was in." (Graham, 12th December 2012)

Although understood by wallers in variously different ways, the establishment of the 'eye' is nonetheless firmly linked with the process of becoming familiar with stone as described in an earlier section of this chapter. An understanding of the geology of the stone and its flexibility is therefore developed as part of an embodied and emotional engagement with the material. This is particularly evident in examples of using a walling hammer. Returning to the diagram of the walling hammer (Figure 6-2), I reported how my initial attempts at swinging the hammer were challenging. A similar experience was shared by Jessica Harrison, PhD affiliate on The Stone Project. A collaborative endeavour comprising of academics and stone sculptors, the overall aim of The Stone Project was to investigate the reservoir of cultural knowledge associated with stone. As an introduction to a Stone Project publication, Harrison (2011) wrote about her own experiences of learning how to carve stone. Although already an artist and sculptor, Harrison was unfamiliar with stone and found it an intimidating material. In her first carving session, she was given a demonstration by a professional and then provided with the tools to try things out. She had great difficulty in trying to replicate the actions of the professional and found her body to be uncooperative:

“I found my limbs rigid and tight, displaced and poorly aimed, confirmed by the growing bruise on my left hand that was now beginning to bleed from a few too many misjudged hits from the mallet...I found that faced with trying to control the stone, I had lost control of my body, my rhythm erratic and inconsistent, my limbs literally flailing around in an attempt to command the material and tools. I was completely unprepared by the inability of my body to do what I wanted it to do” (Harrison 2011: n.p.n.)

The lack of control resonated with my own difficulties of yielding the catchie hammer. The weight of the tool, combined with the effort of trying to control my swings meant I very quickly became exhausted and although not evident at the time, caused my muscles to ache the following day. Following repeated instruction and practice however, my body became accustomed to the physicality of the hammer and I could begin to judge strikes with increased accuracy. Reflecting upon these examples, embodied *control* therefore represents an important stage in the process of becoming familiar with skilled practice. Combined with an understanding of how to follow the lines of flow within a material (Ingold 2010), the craftsperson is able to yield the hammer for most effective results. Used in such a way, as Harrison (2011) suggests, the hammer can begin to be thought of as a prosthetic extension of the body. Similarly, professional waller Snow, considers his tools as “companions” (2008: 78) familiar, well-worn subjects which are embodied by the craftsperson and yield to their guidance.

Additionally, discussions of embodiment prompted me to consider the kind of bodies through which walling and other forms of stonework are enacted. The concepts of strength, stamina and control are laced with elements of masculinity, perhaps the result of historically male-dominated stone-based professions. Being both women, this reflection was brought into sharper relief as I found my own embodied experiences of stone-work resonating strongly with those of Jessica Harrison. Though Harrison does not directly consider her gendered body, it is evident from the earlier extract that the masculine ideals of a strong, controlled physical body are essential traits of a stone carver. To an extent, these ideals are also aligned to walling practice. As such, the embodied experiences and expressions encountered throughout this research are shaded by configured masculinities. Arguably still a male-dominated profession and hobby, the women involved in the research, both as professional and amateur, were in the minority. However there was little, if any notable evidence of the women engaging discursively with the subject of embodiment in any way different to their male counterparts. It therefore appears that

elements of masculinity are embedded within, and reproduced through, dry-stone walling practice.

Furthermore to gaining physical and muscular control over the tool, for effective use it is also important to demonstrate emotional control. A professional explained how on occasion, the hammer was used as a way of releasing tension and feelings of anger, which produced less than effective results:

“I was working with my son and I was smashing up stone. And he said, what colour are you thinking dad, when you do that? I said, red! And he said, well try and think about a lighter colour! And he was absolutely right – I was using the hammer the wrong way – I was putting all my annoyance into it and getting rid of the “I hate that guy”, and when I changed and I thought of green or yellow or something, it broke the stones much more efficiently. It was interesting I lost the anger bit and that helped me a lot.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

This particular example indicated how the physical actions of the body are closely linked to the emotional thought processes of the wallers. Though lacking focus and therefore control over the particular task of shaping stone, the hammer, as an extension of the body, responds to the wallers’ feelings of anger and frustration. Furthermore, upon realising the level of emotional involvement in the task, the waller is able to reconfigure his or her emotional engagement and establish physical control over the activity.

Getting an eye or hand into the wall is further linked to a sense of embodied engagement when it is likened to a muscular component of the body. As several professionals noted, a break of more than a week or two from walling means it can be tedious getting the ‘eye’ back into the wall when work recommences. Figured like a muscle, the eye requires frequent exercise and warming up to remain fully functional and effective. This was particularly notable for the part-time professional wallers who were skilled in other areas and often worked on projects different from walling:

“If I haven’t done any walling for a few months, been working on some other projects, and I go back to walling, I am way slower than I am if I’m stuck in the middle of a 6 month walling project and I’m up to bashing up 6-8 metres of wall a day. You know, that’s just the way it is, you have to get your eye in, build the strength up in your hands, that sort of thing.” (Peter, 22nd January 2013)

“If I’m maybe doing a fence for a couple of weeks and I go back to doing a wall, it takes me kind of a day or two to tune back into it, just to kind of get back into the mind set of just looking for a stone.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

There was a similar relationship between those who were required to work with different types of stone, implying the mind, body and senses respond differently to the changing properties of stone:

“Well I think when you go to a different type of stone it takes you two or three days to get your eye in.” (Doug, 6th December 2012)

“When you come into a job with a different kind of stone it usually takes you a day, two days to get used to what the stone looks and feels like and how it goes together.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

Up to this point, my focus has been on the waller becoming accustomed to the flexibility of the stone, but here, it is apparent that the waller, as a physical and emotional individual, must also demonstrate a degree of flexibility and control. Embodied engagement with the stone could therefore be explained as an exercise in generating flexibility between the waller and their material.

Walling as Flow

The idea of controlled flexibility is closely related to the state of mental and physical being which is commonly known as ‘the zone,’ ‘flow’ or being ‘in the element’. Although articulated in different ways, the concepts of zone, flow and element are similar. Flow is defined by Csikszentmihalyi as “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter” (2002: 4). It is related to the emotional, physical and mental engagement with activities which generate optimal experience; that is, a deep sense of exhilaration, enjoyment and control of our actions (Csikszentmihalyi 2002). When in the zone, or experiencing flow, individuals are absorbed by a task or process. As noted earlier, the process of becoming familiar with the hammer requires a degree of physical and mental flexibility before control is achieved. In terms of the body being in flow, Csikszentmihalyi emphasises the equal involvement of the mind in the form of concentrated attention. Robinson (2010) prefers the term ‘being in your element’ and further develops Csikszentmihalyi’s definition by noting how the state of being in an element comes about through a sense of relaxation and contentment with the objectives of the activity. This calm approach to the activity resonates strongly with my experience of walling. On one occasion, an air of calm, engaged silence appeared to indicate ‘flow’:

By the end of the day, things were starting to come together. It is a very calm group – no frustrations or grumpy mutterings, people just got their heads down and got on with it. Particularly after our last tea break it seemed like an air of peacefulness had settled around us. We were all engrossed in our tasks and even when David said we should start packing up, everyone was reluctant to do so. A lot of things just seemed to start to click. (Diary Entry, 6th November 2012)

A similar level of focussed engagement seemed to demonstrate a professional waller's experience of flow:

“You kind of get into a wee world of your own, the day passes really quickly, you know if you're building a wall and you're so kinda focussed on what you're doing, you don't notice what else is going on, it's definitely good that way...Or sometimes it's bad because the day passes too quickly, you know, it's like is that lunchtime already? It feels like you've only been working for an hour or two, it's definitely a job like that because you really do get quite involved in it.” (Ryan, 15th December 2013)

The sense of time passing quickly when fully engaged in an activity is an experience that many individuals are no doubt able to relate to. Davidson and Milligan (2004) suggest it is emotional engagement with the task that can affect the awareness of time passing, or lack thereof. Feelings of contentment allow concentration to be directed upon the task and demonstrate a fully engaged body and mind that has little concern for anything outside of its focus. For Robinson, in addition to the 'quick' passage of time, it is possible to move into what he calls a “meta-state” where “ideas come more quickly, as if you're tapping a source that makes it significantly easier to achieve your task” (2010: 91). In the following quote, a waller appears to experience meta-state, where physical and mental actions become more stream-lined and fluid:

“I've always called it a purple patch and I mean I'm flying, I mean I can put up stone...Well to be honest I can take three or four stones and put one on the wall, one on the wall, one on the wall, go get three more and do exactly the same and that's when the other lads stop and watch me and I say what's going on and they say look at how much wall you just put up. I don't know why that happens, it's weird.” (Ian, 12th December 2012)

When questioned about being in 'the zone', several wallers responded, unprompted, with the term flow. In one of the cases, a lack of flow was linked to poor and inconsistent

progress, suggesting that a level of mental and physical engagement is also related to quality of work:

*“If the work is not **flowing**, then you tend to be producing a bad job. You’re hiccupping along.” (Paul, 10th December 2012)*

*“When you’re working away and the stones are **flowing** correctly you can get lost in it.” (Stuart, 24th January 2013)*

*“It’s one of those things you start **flowing** and all of a sudden you find yourself picking up speed and you don’t even know you’re picking up speed because you’re getting your head around what the stone is and where you are really, I suppose.” (Nick, 9th January 2013)*

In order to achieve flow, an element of control over the physical body is required. Control of the body, as noted by Csikszentmihalyi (2002) marks the primary stage in exploring how all types of physical activity can contribute to flow. It does not require the body to be involved in significant physical feats, but even simple activities can become enjoyable when refigured in terms of flow. In order to produce feelings of flow, Csikszentmihalyi suggests a series of components such as the setting of clear goals, measurement of progress, complete concentration on the activity and a drive to increase challenges when the activity becomes stale. The crucial stage in these series of components is having the skill and desire to continue pursuing new challenges. Here, mental and physical strength are enrolled in the drive for achievement, and difficult or tiring elements of activity become less prominent. Robinson helpfully reconfigures this stage of the process in terms of energy where despite physical and mental challenges, “being in the zone doesn’t take energy away from you; it gives it to you” (2010: 93). Figured in this way, an enjoyable activity combined with a desire to improve has the potential to become less physically and mentally draining over time. The element of control can also be understood in terms of the improvement in physical fitness over time. Development of muscular strength and stamina ensures the body and mind remains in control and focussed on the activity. Physiological changes associated with physical improvement can be regarded as a positive effect of walling practice, however as a result of the physically demanding nature of the work the body may also be at risk of injury or sustained discomfort.

“Half-shut and bent from the hips”

Robert Cairns (1986) writes that there is approximately one tonne of stones in every yard of wall which combined with an average daily rate for one waller of six or seven yards

(Garner 1984), leaves little space for debate over the physically demanding nature of walling. As a result, care must be taken to ensure the body is in full control of movements and does not suffer injury. The physical effects associated with lifting and placing stone allows for the slow development of muscle and strength. One professional remarked on how unfamiliar movements left arm and hand muscles feeling unusually prominent:

“So when I first started I hadn’t been doing it all day for two weeks on the trot, so I did find that my hands and forearms, weren’t sore, but I felt like the muscles were bursting out of my skin because they hadn’t been used.” (Adam, 15th January 2013)

The not altogether unpleasant feeling referred to above is an example of a positive effect associated with walling. There were other professional craftspeople who noted how they had begun to feel physically fitter and healthier following sustained walling practice:

“Well I got a lot fitter. And I used to do a lot of my own labouring as well so I would do all the wheel-barrowing and shifting of stone so you build up muscles quite quickly.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

“It’s a muscular exercise, but it’s part of a control process that is just the same as if you went to the gym. Where you follow this process and if it goes out of the ordinary or you do too much, you stop or ask for help or decide to do it another way.” (Edward, 24th January 2013)

Improvements on muscular development and general fitness demonstrate an increased level of control over bodily movements. However despite an upward trajectory of skill and stamina development, exhaustion as an effect of the demanding work was still noted on occasion. This was characterised as both physical and mental fatigue:

“Some people think it’s just physical but actually sometimes I’m more mentally tired than physically tired. Because you’re looking all the time, you’re puzzling and you’re working out what’ll fit where.” (Katie, 14th January 2013)

This example reinforces the importance of a fully engaged mind in the process of constructing a wall. It demonstrates how the mind and body considered together in the form of the ‘eye’ can be regarded as a muscle, which although with repeated work can strengthen over time, it is also capable of suffering fatigue.

Despite muscular and fitness improvements afforded by regular walling practice, the body is also at risk of injury. Repetitive motion such as bending and straightening the back, or over-exertion from lifting heavy stones can leave the body in a state of discomfort. Cairns’

recalls an aged dyker who “walked half-shut, bent from the hips with constant stooping” (1986: 7), demonstrating how sustained movements like stooping and bending can change the physical bearing of a body. In a study of strawberry pickers in California, Mitchell (2003) notes how labourers’ bodies are similarly changed and weakened:

“Strawberry picking and plant maintenance require that workers spend the day doubled over at the waist as they work their way down a row, often standing and stretching only when they reach the end or when they have filled a box. Back injuries are exceedingly common.” (2003: 236)

The repetitive practice of strawberry picking therefore becomes ingrained in the labourers’ physiology. In a similar vein, two professional wallers noted how the increased use of tools, such as a hammer or chisel, caused pain in the yielding arm:

“My elbow was going because I spent too much time dressing stone.” (Ian, 12th December 2012)

“The thing I have noticed recently is that I’ve been doing a lot of shaping of stone with the chisel, and after 3 or 4 months of doing it this year, just constantly, my hammer arm is very, very sore, I’ve got a pulled muscle.” (Craig, 18th December 2012)

As a result, both wallers made a decision to limit their use of tools and within a short space of time noticed a reduced level of discomfort. Many wallers are aware of the potential for pain and have also made similar adjustments to their physical movements. As a result of moving several tonnes of stone per day, it is unsurprising that wallers are primarily concerned about the condition of their back muscles. It is therefore important to be aware of the physical limits of the body and to avoid over-exertion:

“The first thing I’ll say to anybody is if you’re not sure if you can lift it, don’t bother, I’ll do it or I’ll give you a help, you’ve got to be so careful though, if you put your back out, you’ve had it.” (Ian, 12th December 2012)

“Yes, well, I have had back problems, that are probably to do with lifting things that are too... I just shouldn’t be lifting. Sometimes my wife would say I’m a very impatient person, so rather than getting help with something that is too big, I would just tend to go for it. And I think probably I have hurt my back in the past doing that.” (Terry, 16th January 2013)

“It’s hard on the back, especially if lots of big stones are used and after a few days of that during the week you start to feel like you’re getting to your limit though.”
(Joe, 22nd January 2013)

During participatory sessions, the DSWA qualified instructor was very strict about the need to adhere to health and safety guidelines, particularly concerning lifting heavy stones. To prevent injuring our backs, we were encouraged to move large stones in pairs, a tricky sort of task involving precise communication and carefully executed movements. In addition to back problems, another common reference to the body and potential injury was associated with the increasing age of the waller. Stress on joints, stiffness and muscular aches were noted to increase with age. As a way of reducing the effect of the work, some wallers remarked on how they became increasingly careful and when possible, reduced their workload:

“And as I’m getting older now, I need to do slightly lighter work, I think the domestic side of it would be a good thing because it’s not as heavy stone.” (Frank, 14th December 2012)

“As time gets on and you get a bit older and a bit more fragile, you start getting the odd twinge and lately, you’ve got to be careful you don’t suddenly put a muscle out in your back. And that’s partly why I’ve had to slow down a bit and work shorter days.” (Adam, 15th January 2013)

It was also the case that physical difficulty and increasing age was articulated in conjunction with poor weather conditions. The following section considers the impact of weather on physical safety and comfort as well as level of mental engagement.

Embodied and Emotional Impact of Weather

Although it was outlined in an earlier chapter that many professional wallers were motivated by the opportunity to work out-of-doors, it stands to reason that a full-time professional will, inevitably be required to work in a range of weather conditions, some of which will be unpleasant. Many full-time wallers insisted that there were few weather conditions which physically prevented walling, with the exception being snow and hard frost, where stones are frozen together or buried under snow drifts. The *BTCV Practical Handbook of Dry Stone Walling* (1986) notes that walling should be avoided during extremely wet or cold weather as work becomes correspondingly more difficult and dangerous. The *Handbook* goes on to state that cold weather can cause the skin on the hands to crack painfully and if the body is cold or stiff, risks the development of serious

back problems. In terms of coping with poor weather conditions, it was noted that increasing age of the waller was related to increased physical discomfort and a reduction in enthusiasm for the work:

“Well, it [working in poor weather] never used to bother me, really, when I was younger. But I’m not sure about now.” (Terry, 16th January 2013)

“Because I’m a wee bit older I get more joint problems and stuff so therefore that is making me think I might have to do, certainly less winter work because it can be harsh in the winter, wet and windy in the winter up here. There are days I sometimes think, well 20 years ago I used to work out in anything, but some days now, I think I’m not bloody working in that today, because some days it can be bloody hellish and it’s kind of hard physically on days like that.” (Andrew, 17th January 2013)

Regardless of age however, the impact of weather related phenomena on the body was a further source of physical discomfort and mental distraction. However other weather conditions had the capacity to have significant impact upon comfort and level of concentration. On two occasions during participatory work, cold weather greatly reduced my enjoyment and concentration levels and made for rather uncomfortable working conditions:

It wasn’t long after we started that I began to get extremely cold from kneeling on the ground. I commented to Amy and Daniel that I hadn’t felt this cold on any of the other walling projects – not even the one we had in November. Thankfully the allotments have a small shed so we were able to shelter in there when the hail came. (Diary Entry, 23rd May 2013)

It rained a little, then snowed but not for long. After lunch we were all very cold and it took some moving to get warmed up again. I put on another fleece and Angela had to get Amy to put on another pair of over-trousers to help her warm up. I don’t think I got as warm as what I’d been before lunch and goes to show what a difference sitting still makes to your body temperature. (Diary Entry, 2nd April 2013)

On these occasions I found myself paying more attention to the effects the weather and surrounding environment was having on my body rather than the walling process. Kneeling on the cold ground for example caused a great deal of discomfort and sapped any residual heat from my body. Icy blasts of wind and rain felt like needles against my exposed face. Cold and damp limbs made movements stiff and clumsy and every stone seemed like it required volumes of energy to lift and secure in the wall. It also made

conversation challenging as it was often difficult to hear voices above the wind and through woolly hats. These situations were extremely distracting from walling and did little to develop the feeling of enjoyment or expressions of flow. However thankfully, such occasions were few and despite the discomfort, myself and the other participants were able to battle through the elements and complete the feature. The determination associated with building in challenging weather was acknowledged by a professional:

“We just did a wall a couple of weeks ago for a farmer at his cottage and it was just a wee wall and it was filthy, you know the place was just, all the stone was filthy, we were caked [in mud], all day, it just wasn’t nice, but at the end of the day we still managed to build a nice wee wall with the stone he supplied, so when I look back, I think, ach, it wasn’t too bad.” (Ryan, 15th December 2012)

Physical discomfort associated with working in challenging weather is rarely painful or permanent but as was implied by some wallers, may become increasingly difficult as the body changes with age. Walling practice has the capacity to impact upon the engaged mind and body in a variety of ways that can be loosely categorised as positive or negative. Positive impacts, such as increased health or fitness have the capacity to encourage progress and as was suggested by Robinson (2010), a body and mind engaged ‘in the zone’ is able to produce its own energy. Negative impacts however, can have the opposite effect upon progress. Injuries or pain sustained from poor working habits or repetitive movement may hinder walling progress. Increasing age was a common way in which professional wallers engaged with aspects of embodiment and in the cases mentioned, demonstrated an increased awareness of the physical risks associated with walling. Poor weather conditions also caused a range of physical discomforts and mental distractions and although their effects were perhaps felt more keenly by older individuals, were generally short-lived.

Conclusions

It has been the aim of this chapter to provide insight into the development of an embodied sense of stone within walling activities by exploring how knowledge practices are transmitted through the practitioner’s body and between craftspeople. Embodied metaphors of getting an ‘eye’ into the stones, or getting a ‘feel’ for them, are extremely common within the walling vernacular. They demonstrate the importance of physical and mental engagement and in accordance with the theories of Merleau-Ponty, reject the division of body and mind. By taking a phenomenological approach to walling, participatory encounters act as a framework from which it has been possible to uncover the embodied and emotional geographies inherent within walling practice. As such, I have

presented several examples from which the intimate link between the physical body and emotional self can be explored. Concepts of ‘flow’ or ‘being in the element’ demonstrate this link as a state of physical, emotional and mental engagement, allowing dry-stone work to ‘flow’ effortlessly. By educating the body, mind and senses to the vital properties of stone, the waller becomes familiar with the lines of flow (Ingold 2010) within the material, and skilled in discerning how it can be most effectively used within wall building. In doing so, the waller develops a degree of embodied ‘fitness’, becoming sensitive to knowledge acquired *through* the body, in ways which are not exclusive to discursive representation. Though some professional wallers dismiss ‘more-than-representational’ forms of knowledge arising through embodied movement and sensuous disposition as ‘mystique’, there is scope for considering the terms ‘eye’, ‘feel’ and ‘flow’ as metaphors for embodied engagement.

This chapter also sought to explore how participatory practices facilitate the understanding of embodied, emotional and material interactions with stone. In being committed to the process of ‘learning is doing’, I was able to give life to the metaphors of ‘eye’ and ‘feel’ by considering them from the perspective of my own workings with stone. From the position of being a female apprentice waller, I was also able to consider how embodied work is often (but not exclusively) produced through men’s bodies, leaving traces of masculinity embedded within the walling practice. Embodied engagement with the activity thus provided me with the opportunity to interrogate my own physiological and emotional sensitivities, and remain alert to the ways that feeling was expressed by other practitioners. Sustained, repetitive practice and inclement weather conditions were common themes used by wallers to convey how embodied and emotional wellbeing is affected by the activity. In the next chapter, the potential for emotional and physical wellbeing is further explored by paying attention to the social interaction and creative engagement afforded by hobbyist and community walling groups.

Chapter 7 : Craft, Creativity and Making Connections

“Making is connecting because through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments”

(Gauntlett 2011: 2)

The previous chapter considered the embodied and emotional process of becoming familiar with stone and walling practice. Principally it was concerned with the education of the body-and-mind within the process of making. This chapter is also concerned with making, but differs in its approach by considering making as a way of establishing connections between people and places. In the initial section, attention is drawn to the scope for walling as a craft to provide positive impacts on mental and physical wellbeing. Empirically, hobbyist and community walling groups are the focus of this section, but owing to the wealth of data acquired, Huntly Mental Health group in Aberdeenshire will act as a narrative for the various components. The discussion begins by providing a context for the study of outdoor activities and impact on health and wellbeing. It will then go on to deconstruct the elements within group walling that have potential for positive effects, namely, cooperative working, creative engagement via craft and the making of meaningful places for communities. Discussion then turns to the place of dry-stone walling within contemporary British crafting culture and the specific context of the creative industries.

Walling and Wellbeing: Hobbyist and Community Walling Craft Practices

While Chapter 5 considered the motivations to wall from the perspective of professionals and serious amateurs, this section focuses on the motivations associated with walling as a hobbyist craft.⁶³ To revisit a distinction made earlier, Stebbins (1992) observes an important difference between the terms of amateur and hobbyist: an amateur is differentiated from a hobbyist on account of making a conscious decision to take control of his or her education and pursue further avenues of learning. In taking control of skill development, over time amateurs may become full or part-time professional craftspeople,

⁶³ Chapter 5: ‘Biography of Contemporary Wallers’ (p. 167).

as was the case with over half of the late-career wallers interviewed. The focus of this initial section however, lies with those individuals who regularly participate in walling and have little desire to alter their pace of learning. It is noted however, that some hobbyists may pursue and achieve low-level qualifications from the DSWA, such as the initial or intermediate certificates. As was outlined in Chapter 5, in order to safeguard the techniques and traditions of the craft, the DSWA encourages hobbyists to work towards attainment of certificates. It was therefore concluded that individuals would continue to be considered hobbyists, despite possessing, or working towards, certificates. Of the research conducted, there were several instances of interaction with hobbyist groups. Two of these, the South West Scotland branch of the DSWA and the independent West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association, could be considered conventional organisations, set up for the sole purpose of pursuing dry-stone related activities on a regular basis. Three other groups, brought together by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), may be thought of as a combination of hobbyist and community-volunteer groups, where participants were both interested in developing their skill in walling, but also in creating or repairing dry-stone structures within their local area.⁶⁴ In further distinction to the South West Scotland branch and West of Scotland Association, the projects organised by TCV were short-term in nature, due to budget limits. However, it will be shown in later sections of the chapter that in the case of one particular group, it has been possible to join-up various sources of funding to provide the participants with further walling opportunities.

Motivations for engaging in hobbies and crafts are wide-ranging and highly subjective. In essence, people engaging in activities during their leisure time do so because in some way, it improves their emotional or physical feelings of wellbeing. As was noted in Chapter 2, the past twenty years have seen an increase in the concept of 'wellbeing' in relation to health. It has allowed for a shift in focus from factors that cause illness, to those which promote and protect health (Cattell *et al* 2008). Though Fleuret and Atkinson (2007) observe that the concept of wellbeing is complex, it has nonetheless provided opportunity for researchers to consider the mental, physical, social and spatial dimensions that contribute to health improvement. In particular, Cattell *et al* (2008) suggest that networks providing social support, through various kinds of leisure activities or community participation are capable of exerting positive influences on feelings of wellbeing.

Considered within the context of walling as a hobbyist craft, it was possible to distil three aspects of the activity that had the greatest impact on participants' feelings of improved

⁶⁴ See Chapter 3: 'TCV Project' (p. 79) for further information on the structure of TCV and the groups involved in their funded walling project.

wellbeing. In the first instance, the social interaction afforded by the group activity was frequently noted as a helpful way of developing cooperative working skills. The second theme frames walling as a form of creative engagement with stone. The sense of achievement felt in making something with one's hands was identified as a powerful factor encouraging participants to continue walling beyond the scope of the initial project. Engagement with stone was also likened to other forms of creative practice, such as painting or drawing, which were identified as helpful activities in overcoming mental health difficulties. The final theme reflects on the role of walling in community place-making and social inclusion. Two of the group walling projects on which the data is based involved the construction of a dry-stone feature within a community-owned space. On this evidence, walling acts as a catalyst for the promotion of positive social and cultural outcomes associated with the construction of community spaces. The opportunity for multiple kinds of affect was possible within each domain, some of which were realised and acknowledged, whilst others were difficult to comprehend or went unnoticed. One of the more prominent examples of affective influence was the circulation of a shared sense of atmosphere between members of the group. On occasion, these shared atmospheres were capable of both improving feelings of enjoyment, and, reducing them.

The format of the subsequent section is based around data generated from participant observation with four hobby walling groups. The primary narrative is informed by a period of sustained research with Huntly Mental Health group in Aberdeenshire. This group initially received funding from the TCV Heritage Lottery Project,⁶⁵ but then went on to secure other sources of community funding to allow them to continue walling and create a larger feature wall. As a result of their long-running project, of all the groups I participated most frequently with the Huntly Mental Health, meeting on several occasions between November 2012 and November 2013. Of the other hobbyist groups, two were also brought together and funded by TCV. Neither of these groups sought additional funding once the TCV project was complete. The West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association was the only hobbyist group not involved in the TCV project. The group meets on a regular basis and is involved in a variety of walling activities. In July 2013, I participated in the construction of a dry-stone feature within a community garden in Callander, Stirlingshire. Though participation with Huntly Mental Health informs much of the following discussion, where relevant, evidence from other walling groups is identified and incorporated to provide a comprehensive account of what it means to be a hobbyist waller.

⁶⁵ See Chapter 3: 'TCV Project' (p. 79) for more information on TCV Heritage Lottery Funded project.

Working Together on the Wall

The members of Huntly Mental Health (HMH) group began their journey into the world of walling on a rainy November morning in 2013 on a farm in Aberdeenshire. We totalled seven in number, three of whom were group leaders. No one had been involved in walling before, but for various reasons, all were eager to try their hand. The event was funded by the Aberdeenshire branch of The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and provided HMH with two full weekends of instruction with a highly experienced dry-stone walling mastercraftsman. Between periods of instruction, the group was encouraged to meet for ‘practice sessions’ during which time the techniques taught by the instructor could be applied. Introduction to the first weekend of instruction commenced with a brief lecture on the basic techniques of wall building in a mercifully dry, but unpleasant smelling, cattle-shed. The unusual location and neighbouring animals drew some interest from members of the group unfamiliar with farmyard life. A rural town located off the A76 between Aberdeen and Inverness, Huntly lies near the western boundary of Aberdeenshire Council. The wall that would act as a test-bed for the participants and I was located on a farm only a few miles outside of Huntly town. Although the tumbledown wall served no current purpose, the farm owner was keen to see it repaired and offered his premises for the duration of the course. The intriguing agricultural location stimulated chatter between members of the group but it was clear from the hesitant nature of the interaction that familiarity between members varied. Following brief introductions, everyone was required to work in close proximity along a two-metre stretch of wall. Walling can be done alone, as a pair or larger group. Working in such close proximity however, interaction was inevitable and as described in Chapter 6, was useful in facilitating the understanding of walling practice.⁶⁶ Gauntlett (2011) recognises that social interaction and engagement is a significant component of making things and can improve connections with social and physical environments. As shown by Figure 7-1, people soon began to branch off to work in groups of two or three, allowing for greater depth of discussion on technique and application. This proved particularly useful when difficulties with the selection or positioning of stones arose. Those nearby were able to assist in the problem solving process by offering alternative suggestions or perspectives on the situation. Working together in a cooperative way is considered by Sennett (2012) to be a craft in itself that requires skill in understanding and responding to others if the encounter is to be mutually beneficial. Sennett goes on to suggest that such skills are often simplified as ‘social skills’, a term which paints a superficial image of a charming and conversational individual.

⁶⁶ See Chapter 6: ‘Understanding Dry-stone Walling Practice’ (p. 188).

However the ability to listen closely, behave in a tactful manner and negotiate points of agreement or disagreement adds significant depth and seriousness to the interpretation of social skills.



Figure 7-1: Working together in pairs. (Photo by author.)

Sennett terms these ‘dialogic skills’; skills based upon a more cooperative form of communication:

“Closely attending to and interpreting what others say before responding, making sense of their gestures and silences as well as declarations. Though we may have to hold ourselves back to observe well, the resulting conversation will become a richer exchange for it, more cooperative in character, more dialogic.” (Sennett 2012: 14)

From the outset, members of HMH group demonstrated significant respect for the dialogic skills involved in cooperative working. Nonetheless, as a result of HMH walling sessions being scheduled regularly over a period of twelve months, it was possible to map the development of such skills over time. As participants became increasingly familiar and comfortable with each other, we began to interact more and express our frustrations in ways that avoided damaging the progress of others:

We switched up who we worked next to quite often as everyone was very comfortable with each other. If anyone got frustrated with a part of the building, we expressed this as a joke or quietly moved onto another section. (Diary Entry, 2nd April 2013)

In comparison to the cooperative nature of HMH, tensions and frustrations between members of other walling groups reflect a lack of appreciation and understanding of dialogic skills. In the following extract, the participant appears not to listen to the advice provided by the instructor and becomes offended by repeated correction:

One of the participants was a little put out when David kept correcting him. Although I was away from the exchange, the man left for a few minutes and then came back to continue. David later told me the participant was unwilling to listen to his (David's) instruction and thought he knew better. (Diary Entry, 18th April 2012)

This example demonstrates the importance of listening closely and interpreting what is said by the discussant. As Sennett implies in the quote cited earlier, frustrations may make it difficult to 'hold ourselves back' but a failure to do so prevents progression of the dialogue. In this instance, the participant walking away brought the conversation and opportunity for cooperation, to an end. The skills associated with cooperation are regarded by Sennett (2012) to be in danger of being lost on account of changes within modern society. Isolation felt as a result of increasing social and economic inequalities risk creating an "us-against-them" (2012: 7) mentality. As a result, the focus upon difference, rather than similarity, prevents dialogic interaction between groups. In taking Sennett's argument forward, it therefore stands to reason that by improving skills of cooperation, there is potential for overcoming social problems associated with inequality and difference.

Working cooperatively also requires that an individual is prepared to share. In addition to the sharing of knowledge or technique as described in the previous chapter, the sharing of food, tools and workload was quickly established and encouraged within the HMH group. Although there were no specific budgetary allocations within the project, from the outset food, tea and coffee were shared amongst all members of the group. The HMH group leader, Angela, told me she believed that bringing people together to eat made for better group integration and therefore improved working relationships. By bringing food to share, the group was drawn together in one location and encouraged feelings of inclusion and acceptance. This intention continued for the duration of the project and began to inform further ideas of cooking together. Towards the end of the HMH walling project, group members suggested a dry-stone fire-pit be constructed in their community garden. The purpose of the fire-pit (see Figure 7-2) was to provide a place where local people could gather to grill fish, bake potatoes and toast marshmallows. The sharing of food is a familiar concept within other HMH group projects. The fire-pit is located within the community allotment gardens where HMH tend to their own plots and base many of their

activities. Construction of the stone fire-pit for cooking added a new dimension to HMH's concept of food sharing and has become a well-used facility.



Figure 7-2: Completed stone fire-pit located in Huntly Community Allotments. (Photo by author.)

As a group we were also encouraged to share the physical challenges associated with walling. From a health and safety perspective it is dangerous to move large heavy stones alone and it was therefore important to work together and share the weight of the stone. The dense, irregular granite stone (shown in Figure 7-2) common in much of Aberdeenshire meant that large pieces were often cumbersome and difficult to move. While some individuals (both men and women) considered it a personal achievement to move a stone alone, others had little problem asking for help:

“Me and Amy would roll a stone together if it was too much for one of us to do.” (Brenda, Focus Group Interview, 8th November 2013)

“I was always having to ask people to help [move stones].” (Brenda, Focus Group Interview, 8th November 2013)

The exchange of physical strength to achieve a common goal is yet another example of the importance of cooperation. This kind of interaction also leads to a shared sense of achievement and progress when the action is carried out successfully. It was noted on several occasions that emotions, with positive or negative associations, were shared and felt throughout the group. As was described previously, the companionable and cooperative nature of the HMH group meant that frustrations were frequently disguised as humour. However in other groups, frustrations and emotions ran high and often had negative impacts on the feelings of those working nearby. The following extract identifies

a sense of discomfort felt within a group as a result of an exchange between a participant and the walling instructor:

There was a little unsettlement in the group today – one of the participants was a little put out when David kept correcting him. (Diary Entry, 18th April 2012)

Disagreements or frustrations associated with choosing stone were not the only sources of tension. As the following diary reference shows, physical discomforts⁶⁷ of working in poor weather combined with the effort of negotiating slippery surfaces had significant impacts upon group enthusiasm:

Spirits were a little low throughout the morning as the rain set in and made the working conditions slippery, cold and uncomfortable. (Diary Entry, 18th April 2012)

However a longer extract from this diary section goes on to show how improved weather conditions and a shared sense of progress can similarly spread amongst the group and reignite enthusiasms:

[The rain] cleared up in the afternoon however and after the top-stones were laid, the coping was very quick to finish. This lifted everyone's spirits and we laughed and joked at our efforts. (Diary Entry, 18th April 2012)

As building projects neared completion, the improving mood and positivity of each group was palpable. Laughter and chat between individuals often increased, with the excitement felt at the successful completion of the wall. This collective sense of achievement and pride often erased any prior feelings of frustration or difficulty. In the case of HMH group, a collective sense of progress existed throughout much time spent building. This positive outlook made for enjoyable and improved working relations:

The atmosphere was as amicable as before and everyone worked well together. (Diary Entry, 2nd April 2013)

In this quote, 'atmosphere' refers to a shared sense of emotion. Anderson (2009) regards atmosphere as a term frequently used to describe collective affects; that is, a particular sense of feeling shared between humans. Anderson goes on to acknowledge the inherent ambiguity surrounding the term atmosphere with regards to concepts around affect and emotion. Theories of affect are concerned with trans-personal associations, whilst those of emotion are determinedly personal and subjective. However the concept of an affective

⁶⁷ See Chapter 6, 'Embodied and Emotional Impact of Weather', (p. 222) for further information regarding physical discomfort.

atmosphere unsettles distinctions between affect and emotion. According to Anderson, atmospheres are “impersonal in that they belong to collective situations and yet can be felt as intensely personal” (2009: 80). In this instance, the ambiguity surrounding affective atmospheres is representative of my own experiences of collective wall building. Moments of joy, excitement or tension were easily transferred between members of the group and thus capable of influencing, enhancing and on occasion, altering personal emotions. Andrews *et al* (2014) provides a similar suggestion for how the non-representational idea of affect can be used to make sense of feelings of emotional and social wellbeing. It is proposed that wellbeing should not be considered something taken *from* environment, but rather something fuelling the interaction between human bodies and non-human matter, that arises *as* environment. As such, a shared sense of atmosphere or environment – particularly those that are positive, encouraging and progressive – is evidence of cooperation and integration between members, demonstrating the potential for improved social wellbeing.

In the case of HMH group, working together took on a new dimension when the walling project developed into a new entity. With the help of additional funding, the HMH wallers were able to enter into a skills exchange project, between the community of Huntly and town of Juankoski in Eastern Finland. In June 2013 a group of five trainee wallers and their instructor travelled to Juankoski to work on a dry-stone walling project with interested locals. The aim of the ‘Sticks and Stones’ project was to teach the Finnish group the basics of walling and in return, HMH group would be taught how to work and build with wood. The wallers were accompanied by other Huntly locals from a variety of community groups and together represented a range of skills the town has to offer. As part of their time in Juankoski, the HMH wallers were required to work with several people and overcome language difficulties. For one member of HMH group, this was extremely challenging. Despite working and progressing well throughout the first walling project, residual confidence issues meant that Brenda was extremely apprehensive about the trip to Finland. However with encouragement and support from family and friends, Brenda decided the trip was something “she needed to do” and found it to be an extremely rewarding experience. Speaking to Brenda several months after the visit to Finland, the improvement in her self-confidence was marked. She told me that the opportunities provided by HMH and support from fellow group members had given her the confidence to do other things in life:

“I’ve taken on more challenges in my life and realised things aren’t as scary as what I perceive them to be in my head. Like I’ve said a lot of times, the only person that

judges you worst is yourself. So its believing that you can actually achieve these goals, like the whole Finland thing, I wouldn't have said six years ago I would have been going to Finland, it was such a good experience.”(Brenda, Focus Group Interview, 8th November 2013)

In a study of the everyday interactions and experiences of volunteers, Smith *et al* (2010) point out that participation within community groups can improve feelings of confidence, self-respect and belonging. Elsewhere, as noted by Parr (2008), policy frequently highlights the importance of voluntary work for people with mental health problems, particularly in terms of social inclusion. Cooperative activities, like walling, allow participants to improve feelings of social wellbeing in a variety of ways. This is exemplified by mutual affects, which dispersed among and between group members arise as a shared sense of atmosphere or emotion. However the social element of walling represents only one dimension of how people ‘felt good’ about the activity. Again, using accounts from HMH as a narrative, the following section outlines how construction of dry-stone features drew upon positive aspects of creativity and the gratification derived from making something with ones’ hands.

Creativity and Making

Establishing a definition for creativity is a challenging task that involves creating boundaries around what is and is not considered creative. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) argues that creativity results from the interaction of three elements: a culture with symbolic rules; a person who brings novelty into the symbolic realm and a field of experts to observe and validate the innovation. Without the engagement of all three elements, Csikszentmihalyi does not consider the activity to be respected as an act of creativity. According to Csikszentmihalyi, true creativity is “the process by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed” (1997: 8). This definition appears to focus upon the validation of experts to permit a change in the cultural domain. Expressions of creativity are measured in response to an audience and examples of proceeding innovation:

“There is no way to know whether a thought is new except with reference to some standards and there is no way to tell whether it is valuable until it passes social evaluation” (1997: 23)

I would take issue with this definition of creativity on three accounts. Firstly, it appears to depersonalise the emotional journey of creative engagement that I have experienced and have witnessed in relation to dry-stone walling projects. Csikszentmihalyi points out that

“creativity does not happen inside people’s heads, but in the interaction between a person’s thoughts and a socio-cultural context” (1997: 23). While I would not deny the importance of an audience in some examples of creativity, I would insist that a socio-cultural context is not necessary for the validation of *all* creative activities. Second, Csikszentmihalyi deems it acceptable to measure creative outputs against a set of objective standards created by a field of experts whose response, as human beings, are based upon subjective opinion. Finally, Csikszentmihalyi’s definition seems to be at odds with the fundamental interactive and experimental nature creativity is known to be. Any creative engagement begins as a personal endeavour to do something differently; regardless of whether it is shared with others. Subjectivity is also at the heart of many acts of creative expression – the favourite artist of one person will not be the same as another. Whilst Csikszentmihalyi does explain that the definition is tailored to the extremely high-end examples of creativity (for example, the outputs of Nobel Prize winners), he goes on to distinguish this element of creativity from everyday examples of creativity. This clarification I find unhelpful and further evidence of the exclusionary and hierarchical nature of Csikszentmihalyi’s idea. The most well-known and culturally validated examples of creativity (for example, *Bedroom in Arles* by Vincent Van Gogh or the *Harry Potter* series of novels by J.K. Rowling) began as daily quests to do something differently, and in fact, were both subject to initial rejection by contemporaries.

An alternative approach firmly situating creativity within everyday activities is offered by Gauntlett:

“A process and a feeling...creativity is about breaking new ground, but internally: the sense of going somewhere, doing something that you’ve not done before. This might lead to fruits which others can appreciate, but those may be secondary to the process of creativity itself, which is best identified from within” (2011: 11)

This definition values the personal element involved in creative engagement and respects that it can be guided by the pleasurable act of simply making something. It also hints at the emotional elements involved in making; a key theme stemming from much of the interaction between hobbyist makers and their work. Furthermore, Gauntlett does not restrict this definition to a specific type of creative engagement and instead finds creative expression evident in a variety of practices, including handmade objects and online blogs or videos. Interest in creative practice has also found a place within recent academic geography. Hawkins (2014) notes that geographers are becoming increasingly engaged with an array of art practices including painting, sculpture, photography, performance and

sound art; where attention is paid to the *doing* of practice, rather than simply what it means. Within this realm, it is proposed that creative encounters enable new forms of experience, provoke questions and encourage ways of thinking the world differently (Hawkins 2014). These kinds of engagements are not limited to the academic researcher; they may be felt by all individuals who practice creativity, crafts, or encounter creative material. In further differentiation from the rather elitist definition of creativity proposed by Csikszentmihalyi, Ingold (2011) provides clarification for why novice practitioners must also be regarded as creative:

“Novices learn through repetitive practice in which they are required to copy exemplars shown to them...To copy from a master means aligning observation of the master’s performance with actions in a world that is itself suspended on movement. And this alignment calls for a good measure of creative improvisation. There is creativity, therefore, even (and perhaps especially) in the maintenance of an established tradition” (2011: 179)

This extract also makes clear that it is not necessary that the practice to be unique for it to be considered creative. Within walling, repetitive practice is essential; something considered in greater detail in Chapter 6.⁶⁸ Alignment of the observed performance of the master with actions of the practitioner is reminiscent of the tricky process of acquiring an eye, or feel, for the stones. I understand Ingold’s theory of alignment between observation and action to be an exercise in finding the correct pitch or tone within which one may then go on to replicate the performance of the master. Such pitch, or familiarity, with observation and execution may only be achieved once the practitioner begins to draw together the various tenets of embodied and discursive knowledge. To do this, the individual must demonstrate creativity if progress is to be made.

In terms of these combined articulations of creativity, dry-stone walling from a hobbyist point of view may be considered a creative practice. As a result of sustained involvement with walling, HMH group explored the dimensions of creativity to a greater extent than any other. At least two of the participants actively pursued creative activities like painting and drawing in their spare time and therefore seemed predisposed to recognise the creative elements involved in walling. During a conversation about the thinking process behind creative engagement with stone, two wallers agreed that it was similar to the process involved in painting or drawing:

⁶⁸ For further information and clarification, see Chapter 6: ‘Understanding Dry-stone Walling Practice’ (p. 188).

Researcher: I was trying to think about the process of what I do...touching [the stone], moving it around...but I don't necessarily think about doing it...it's part of the whole process.

Daniel: I've always found that's what skills are...skills are when you do things and you don't have to force yourself to do it. You just do it.

Amy: That's what I think about my drawings, if I have to force myself to do it then I can't do it. But if I just sit down and do it then it's easy enough. Concentrating too much just gets you nowhere.

Daniel: It is weird. It's the same with my paintings and drawings. I'll just shut off [while I'm doing it]. And then I'll look at it and I've got no idea how I did it...it's so freaky, I'll just look at it and go, whoa! (Daniel and Amy, Focus Group Interview, 21st May 2013)

As well as drawing a parallel between creative interactions with stone and canvas, the excerpts illustrate how some creative pursuits cannot be forced and instead must be cultivated in an environment free of pressures or expectation. Although one of the participants remarked that “concentrating too much just gets you nowhere,” it is perhaps a reflection on a different kind of concentration, rather than a restriction in the level of concentration applied to a task. As Sennett (2008) and Gauntlett (2011) suggest, focussed thinking becomes entwined with the act of making, in a way that cannot be separated. The focus of concentration has therefore realigned itself to incorporate the activity of the body and hands. If the correct balance between challenge and progress is found, ‘flow’ as defined by Csikszentmihalyi, will commence.⁶⁹ The excerpts also make reference to flow in terms of “shutting off” and being able to “just do it.” The absorbing nature of being fully engaged in walling was similarly referred to as a way of escaping from, or putting worries aside:

*“You just focus into it; you don't have to worry about anything else around you.”
(Amy, Focus Group Interview, 23rd May 2013)*

In this way, walling demands a great deal of attention and concentration, and draws focus away from other thoughts or feelings. If such thoughts or worries are troublesome in nature, walling or similarly creative tasks, might allow the maker some therapeutic respite:

⁶⁹ For further information, including the full definition of flow, see Chapter 6: ‘Walling as Flow’ (p. 217).

“I find it really therapeutic and calming, you go to your happy place.” (Amy, Focus Group Interview, 23rd May 2013)

Our walling instructor David described a former student who suffered from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder and was concerned that his frequent bouts of worry and anxiety would prevent him being able to focus on the work. This appeared not to be the case and following encouragement from David, he described feeling ‘free’ from the worries in his head:

“He was an military guy and had PTSD and didn’t think he would be able to handle working on the wall, because he can’t concentrate, his head is just full of stuff...Once he realised what he was doing was okay, and I reassured him that his work was good. [I said] stand back look at it, it’s really good. And he could relax a little bit and concentrate. [He said] it’s one of the very few times he could actually relax because he found that when he locked into it all the other stuff cleared, he had a clear head, all of the other stuff went and he could just have a time that was free from stuff that was going on in his head, the worry.” (David, Focus Group Interview, 23rd May 2013)

In a study of the impact of arts projects on mental health, Parr (2006) observed a similar situation where participants described artistic practice as an absorbing activity that allowed them a temporary distraction from disruptive thoughts or feelings. Creative practices and their potential for stress and anxiety reduction are well documented within health and psychology literatures (Lipe *et al* 2012; Crone *et al* 2013; Lawson *et al* 2013). The British charity and research organisation, Mental Health Foundation, are similarly aware of the potentially wide-ranging and sustained benefits associated with creative engagement (MHF 2011). However it was also noted by Crone *et al* (2013) that the exact influences for improvements to mental health and wellbeing are difficult to pin down. Studies of creative practice, like those referred to above, are often based on community arts projects where participants may also feel the benefit of social interaction. Although this section addresses those elements which may improve wellbeing individually, it is important that they are also considered as components of a larger picture.

As well as providing an opportunity to escape from troublesome worries, the process of being creatively engaged with a material can open up new avenues of inspiration and enthusiasm. Gauntlett considers creative pursuits a “process of discovery” (2011: 3), where ideas are not generated prior to the commencement of the activity, but through and as part of the process of making. Crouch (2009b) similarly describes creativity emerging

through the experience and practice of doing, where insight and curiosity are followed in tentative and uncertain ways. As described in Chapter 6, an understanding of the techniques of walling was generated in the process of doing the activity.⁷⁰ We learnt that it is important not to instil a firm intention upon the stone, but to allow it to inform how it should be used. In being alert and responsive to the stony materialities, we, as trainee wallers, were able to follow the flows of the material (Ingold 2010) and discover for ourselves new and alternative ways in which to work with stone. In addition to being a process of discovery in relation to interaction with materials, creativity also allows for a personal kind of discovery. Brenda's story indicates how creative practice, in conjunction with social support and encouragement, can help facilitate lifestyle changes. Parr (2006) and Lawson *et al* (2013) also note how arts projects can act as 'springboards' or 'stepping stones' to other kinds of enriching activities – both creative and otherwise. Several members of HMH group are involved with other projects both within and outside those organised by the mental health team. It is not known whether involvement with these projects pre-dates the commencement of walling activities, however it does indicate a willingness to participate in other kinds of activity. For example, one of the individuals engaged in painting and drawing in his personal time said he was keen to try out walling because "it was an excuse to do something creative, but outdoors" (*Daniel, Focus Group Interview, 21st May 2013*). This indicates how the familiar creative element was a powerful motivating factor to participate in the walling group. After becoming familiar with the basic principles of walling, another member began to think of different features that could be built in dry-stone. This demonstrates how working with stone inspired further creative engagement:

Amy: I want to build something else with it...I'd like to make something pretty, like a centrepiece or something.

Angela: I think Amy is almost going off wall...she's taking herself to the next stage of structure!

David: Yep, she's getting creative now!

Amy: I like walling, but...

Angela: I was saying to her [earlier], you're not doing much walling, and she said, I've been thinking...I know how to make a love-heart [out of stone] you wedge here

⁷⁰ See Chapter 6: 'Developing Familiarity with Stone' (p. 193).

and here...[Amy was] playing with the structures.” (David, Angela and Amy, Focus Group Interview, 23rd May 2013)

The desire to go on and seek out different forms of creative pursuit also refers to the importance of creativity as an enjoyable pursuit. Gauntlett (2011) considers joy a key facet of making. It is an aspect of making, he argues, that is absent from Sennett’s (2008) analysis of craftsmanship and goes on to explain that without joy, making something is simply construction. The element of emotion, both enjoyment and frustration, was prominent within various aspects of walling practice and has been explored in reference to flow and outdoor working.⁷¹ However emotion in relation to creativity, is worthy of further discussion.

In creativity, Gauntlett (2011) identifies ‘process and feeling’ as key components. This is also noted in a survey conducted by the Heritage Crafts Association in which a wide range of craftspeople were asked a series of questions about making. In response to why they regarded making as important, the strongest feeling them arose in relation to emotional involvement:

“There was a lot of emphasis on the importance of making on an emotional and personal level, with particular reference to fulfilment and satisfaction” (Bertram 2013: 5)

However Gauntlett suggests that feelings derived from creative engagement are complex and vary throughout the process of making:

“‘Joy’ does not need to be present throughout. Making things is often an intense, difficult or frustrating experience. But whether the thrilling zing comes right at the start, with an exciting idea before any planning, or right at the end, when the thing is finally done, it’s likely to be in there somewhere” (2011: 76)

Building upon this emotional-orientated definition, it stands to reason that everyday acts of creativity are personal and located within the body and mind of the maker. This definition is in opposition to Csikszentmihalyi’s version of events where creativity does not reside within people’s heads but between their thoughts and a socio-cultural context. People become engaged in everyday acts of craft and creativity, such as walling, painting or knitting, because they want to, and presuming they continue the activity, because they enjoy some or all of the process. It would however be inaccurate to ignore the fact that

⁷¹ See Chapter 6: ‘Walling as Flow’ (p. 217).

some creators do seek external verification or acknowledgement. An example of creativity frequently described by Gauntlett (2011) includes contributors to the video-based social media website *YouTube*. Despite the potential for creativity in the making of videos, the act of posting them on *YouTube* demonstrates that the creator wishes for the video to be watched, and given the website's comments feature, to also receive feedback. As an alternative, though not an altogether conflicting interpretation, Gauntlett considers audience exchange as an example of connections being established between people and things. Connections can also be a source of emotional response and may inform part of the reason for making, as was the case with the creation of the dry-stone walls in the allotment plots belonging to the Huntly Mental Health group. The walls were made with the intention that they would be used (they function as seats) and admired by all users of the allotment garden, not only members of HMH (see Figure 7-3). Intention and reason for construction serve as powerful motivators but are also the source of much emotional gain. *Choosing* to make is a demonstration of expression, individuality and personality, in Sennett's words, it declares: "I made this; I exist" (2008: 130). In particular, the scope for expression in walling was noted by one of the HMH participants:

"That's another reason why I love walling, because it's an expression!" (Amy, Focus Group Interview, 23rd May 2013)

Similarly, crafter, activist and writer Betsy Greer uses knitting as an example of how craft and making encourages expression and empowerment:

"Knitting allows us to explore our creativity, and what is creativity but a true expression of personality? One of the most wonderful aspects of knitting is that it allows us to explore our likes and dislikes and eventually our authentic sense of self. Once we gain this self-awareness, we can generally find the inspiration and energy to make decisions about how we live our lives." (2011:25)

Here, Greer follows a trajectory from creative engagement with a craft practice to becoming familiar with personality and thus, making a place for ourselves in the world. In this sense, making can also be political: the creator has chosen to make, rather than consume or observe. It is a way of communicating to the world who you are and what you care about. In connecting this to ideas of wellbeing, making can therefore be personally and socially empowering (Bertram 2013).



Figure 7-3: Wall built by Huntly Mental Health group members in their plot within Huntly Community Allotments. (Photo by author.)

Making Geographies: Meaningful Networks and Places

This section connects the previous discussions on working together, creativity and making with the suggestion that wellbeing is not only aligned with the individual, but also communities and societies. Once more, Huntly Mental Health group serves as a useful case study to explore this observation. In previous discussions, the trajectory of this project was referred to in relation to a participant's personal journey in developing her confidence. Whilst such personal achievements are extremely significant, my focus now turns to the project as an example of developing new geographies around meaningful social networks. In outlining the importance of social connections, Gauntlett identifies these as a key component in the quest for happiness:

“Happiness, then, is about family, community and wellbeing. It cannot be determined by a certain level of material comfort. Instead, it stems from having meaningful connections with others and meaningful things to do. These projects are especially valuable if they are not contained at the individual level but involve some form of sharing, cooperation, or contribution to other people's wellbeing” (2011: 127)

There are two key messages to take from this statement. First, Gauntlett makes reference to doing ‘meaningful things.’ Meaning can be derived from a variety of activities, however in terms of Gauntlett’s definition, it refers to a goal-orientated project that, importantly, the individual chooses to do. In choosing to become involved in a project, as all members of Huntly Mental Health did, the individual may feel greater pleasure from the activity than if it was merely directed by a change in circumstance (Gauntlett 2011). The ‘meaningful’ dimension of a project ultimately lies with the person, however, as has been described in the previous two sections, working together and being creative may contribute to meaningful associations. The second element of note from Gauntlett’s statement, is that meaningful projects are made more so if they involve sharing, cooperation and a desire to contribute positively to other people’s wellbeing. This social dimension identifies a shift of focus in Gauntlett’s argument from personal happiness and wellbeing to collective happiness and the establishment of social capital. Though there is no settled definition of social capital, Gauntlett refers to Putnam’s version emphasising connections between individuals:

“Connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam 2001: 19 in Gauntlett 2011: 131)

There is however a distinction Gauntlett makes between different types of social capital. Bonding social capital refers to the establishment of connections between people who are similar and may have common interests. Bridging social capital makes links between different groups of people and is described by Gauntlett as a way of embracing diversity within communities. This distinction is also recognised by Parr (2008) in reference to arts projects and people with mental health issues. Parr notes that with respect to individuals with mental health problems, projects that engender bonding social capital may enhance the ways in which people experience belonging and inclusion within the community. Gauntlett goes on to note that it is possible for organisations to have a degree of both kinds of social capital. Although this was not assessed in detail, elements of both may be seen in Huntly Mental Health group.

In November 2013 following the completion of the international walling activities in Finland, I met with some of the participants of HMH to hear their thoughts about walling and the opinions on the trajectory of the project. At the time of meeting it was almost precisely one year since we first met in the memorably smelly cattle shed. Having worked together several times throughout the year, we had all come to know each other very well and it was clear that some firm friendships had established between several members of the

group. These relationships were further developed when the group travelled to Finland in June 2013 as part of the extended walling project. During their time away, the group became increasingly familiar with each other:

“We knew each other but we didn’t know each other really...but we got to know each other a lot more.” (Brenda, Focus Group Interview, 8th November 2013)

This short excerpt demonstrates that the context in which they had previously known each other had changed. Travelling, living and working together meant that interaction was subject to new kinds of influences. Unusual or unexpected circumstances meant that the group had to rely on each other, therefore enacting bonded social capital. An extract from a focus group recounting a lively exchange between two of the individuals to travel to Finland together shows how these bonds can be developed through humour, jest and shared experience:

“Daniel: Yeah Finland [brought us together] because you’re travelling together –

Brenda: Yeah I could have killed him [Daniel] when we got to Amsterdam because I was freaking out about landing –

Daniel: Yeah it was her first time flying and I was saying oh, it shouldn’t be making that noise.

Brenda: And I was like, Daniel I’m going to hit you in a minute! And then you had Amy freaking out in Helsinki...

Researcher: Why?

Brenda: Landing again. And then David and Andy’s bags went missing and we blamed that on Amy.

Daniel: Eventually their bags came back in Juankoski.

Brenda: Yeah and you got the Dolly Parton room...

Daniel: Yeah when we got to our rooms I had this little old lady room that was all pink –

Brenda: And we go a really cool one with a stove in it! But it did bring us closer together. We had some really good laughs. And David got to know us a bit better.” (Brenda and Daniel, Focus Group Interview, 8th November 2013)

In terms of bridging social capital, this was enacted in two ways; at a personal level and an organisational level. Due to the collaborative nature of the trip to Finland, alongside HMH other community groups from Huntly were involved. Being a small town, this meant that some individuals were familiar with each other, but within environments very different to those shared in Finland. This is evidenced by one participant's reflection on interacting with their GP on the walling project:

“That was strange for me, because living in Huntly for so long, me and Jack, the GP, getting to know each other on the first day of walling, I said to him, it's Jack, isn't it? And he said yeah. And I was like, well I didn't want to call you Dr Carter the whole time!” (Brenda, Focus Group Interview, 8th November 2013)

By insisting on calling the doctor by his Christian name, Brenda disrupts the usual doctor-patient relations. The walling practice and corresponding project context therefore acted as a 'leveller' between these two individuals; allowing interaction without the discomfort or restraint of former social status. Collectively known as 'Team Huntly', bridging social capital was further evident between the various local organisations that travelled together to Finland. The experience allowed for interaction between members and groups and encouraged people to learn about each other. Within small communities it is unsurprising that organisations may find themselves in competition for funding. Travelling to Finland as Team Huntly meant that groups were able to concentrate on their similarities rather than differences and improve lines of communication:

“[We're] all looking to be a little more together, rather than against each other all the time. Which is always a useful thing and there is a lot more dialogue and people being much more aware about what others are doing, rather than being surprised to discover that you are duplicating something. The communication lines are becoming a bit more open.” (Sarah, Focus Group Interview, 8th November 2013)

While it is possible to improve social capital in the *process* of working together to make something, it is also possible that the finished object can also contribute to its continued production. The construction of the dry-stone seats and fire-pit in the Huntly allotment gardens was based on the idea that these were new amenities to be used by members of the local community. As mentioned earlier, eating and cooking was regarded by one of the HMH staff as a way of bringing people together to create dialogue and interaction. The fire-pit facilitated this approach in terms of cooking, but also with respect to the elemental appeal of gathering around a fire:

“There is nothing more therapeutic in nature than a fire...people bonding...”
(Angela, Focus Group Interview, 23rd May 2013)

Given the social emphasis placed on the construction of the dry-stone seats and fire-pit, it might be considered a place where social capital can *continue* to develop. It is intended that the social networks established in the process of bringing the place into being are further developed as people make use of, and interact within the site. It is also proposed that the act of creating a place for community interaction makes the aforementioned benefits of creative practice more meaningful. Though there was often a personal journey involved in the construction of the seats and fire-pit, ultimately the members of HMH were inspired and enthused by the idea of constructing a community resource. Situated within the privately-owned Glamourhaugh allotment gardens, access to the dry-stone seats and fire-pit is restricted however it is available to the individuals, community and school groups who maintain plots.⁷²

The construction of the seats and fire-pit was also noted for its potential to serve as a long-standing legacy to the efforts involved in construction. As is observed in Chapter 4, dry-stone features require only a small degree of care and maintenance, meaning structures have the potential to endure within the landscape for many years. Durability, combined with the elements of social and creative interaction involved in their construction, identifies dry-stone features as the ideal candidate for community building projects. For HMH, notions of sustainability and endurance are extremely important and it was recognised by one member that the walling project fit well with these concerns:

“We seem to be running into an area where longer standing legacy things, well crafted items and the idea of local is good, is on the rise. More and more people are becoming aware of the fact that we cannot continue in the unsustainable way that we are doing. They are eventually realising that the world is finite; there’s only so much, of any natural resource and so to craft something well, with longevity and plan it well is worth it.” (Angela, Focus Group Interview, 23rd May 2013)

This extract demonstrates the value of using natural resources carefully and for the long-term. It respects both the durability of the material and the process involved in construction. In terms of legacy, it also acknowledges the participation of the individuals who brought it into being. Through the transformation and improvement of space, community projects are excellent ways of showcasing effort and determination.

⁷² Glamourhaugh allotment gardens are located in Huntly and are privately owned and managed by Huntly Rotary Club for the benefit of the wider community.

Furthermore, if like dry-stone, a durable technique is employed, the structure will stand as a testament to such labour for many years. This idea of imparting a legacy upon the landscape is reminiscent of Ingold's (2000) theory of dwelling, in which:

“The landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves.” (Ingold 2000: 189)

Understood in terms of Ingold's dwelling perspective, dry-stone features exist as an enduring testimony to the individual, and community, efforts involved in their construction. Figured thus, the process of making meaningful places and social connections becomes consolidated as part of the landscape. As a result of the dry-stone constructions at Glamourhaugh gardens by HMM, it is evident that new geographies were made between members of the group and the wider Huntly community. Such creative activities therefore speak of the importance of making meaningful connections between various groups of people and the subsequent role played in building different versions of social capital.

Continuing to explore the theme of ‘creating and making,’ the following section widens out to situate walling within British crafting culture and creative industries. Wellbeing and community development objectives feature prominently within contemporary notions of craft, requiring that more attention be paid to the creative industries. Arguably, dry-stone walling can be considered both a heritage *and* contemporary craft practice, enacted by hobbyist, amateur and professional wallers. I suggest that a symbiotic relationship exists between these various dimension, ensuring that walling as a craft will endure into the future.

Crafting Culture

Craft and Creative Industries

A wide variety of traditional crafts are currently enjoying something of a revival, practiced by hobbyists and professionals throughout Britain. Creative and craft practices are a valuable and growing part of the British economy and, as the previous section demonstrated, also play an important role in social and cultural development. As an activity steeped in traditional forms of craftsmanship, walling is considered a heritage craft by the Heritage Crafts Association (HCA). The HCA is a British charitable organisation, working in partnership with the Government to promote traditional heritage crafts. Established in 2009, it has sought to create a sustainable framework for the future of

heritage crafts by researching their economic and cultural status; advocating on behalf of craftspeople and generally providing support and advice to those involved in craft work (HCA 2014a). Though the HCA provides no specific definition of what they consider to be a ‘heritage’ craft, their agenda is in support of, and framed by the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage:⁷³

“The Heritage Crafts Association supports the 2003 UNESCO Convention and its goal of safeguarding traditional craftsmanship by supporting the continuing transmission of knowledge and skills associated with traditional artisanry - to help ensure that crafts continue to be practiced within their communities, providing livelihoods to their makers and reflecting creativity and adaptation.” (HCA 2014b)

Recent research shows that approximately 170 000 people work in heritage craft businesses in Britain (HCA 2014c). However the heritage craft industry does not represent the complete picture of craft within Britain. Though difficult to define, contemporary crafts are generally considered separate from traditional or heritage crafts (Crafts Council 2012). Contemporary crafts fall within the domain of the Crafts Council, an organisation formed in 1971 that provides support for contemporary craftspeople.⁷⁴ There may however, be some overlap between the HCA and Crafts Council. In a recent study of contemporary craft professionals conducted on behalf of the Crafts Council and in partnership with Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales and Craft Northern Ireland, it was noted that the survey did not include makers of traditional or heritage crafts. However, it was considered important by Creative Scotland to include makers who described themselves as “indigenous” (Crafts Council 2012: 3) and take an innovative approach to their craft. With this crossover in mind, it is difficult to draw specific lines between crafts considered to be heritage or contemporary, or both. Dry-stone walling could feasibly be regarded as a heritage *and* contemporary craft, evidenced by professionals who work on both traditional, agricultural walls and the of construction new, innovative features. Such issues with definition and delineation, as well as the challenge of identifying small business unsurprisingly make it difficult to establish the size of the sector. Nonetheless, in 2012, the Crafts Council estimated that there were approximately

⁷³ Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is defined by UNESCO as: “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills which are transmitted from generation to generation and which provide communities with a sense of identity and continuity” (UNESCO 2014b). The UK has not ratified the convention, however committees in Scotland and Wales are working to identify and record ICH practices.

⁷⁴ The Crafts Council was formed in 1971 under the original name of Crafts Advisory Committee. Its objective was to advise the government on the “needs of the artist craftsman and promote nation-wide interest and improvement in their products” (Crafts Council 2014a). Today, the Crafts Council provides support for contemporary craftspeople, is a registered charity and one of Arts Council England’s National Portfolio Organisations.

23000 contemporary craft businesses functioning in Britain. Though contemporary and heritage crafts may have their differences, together they represent the craft sector within the UK creative industries.⁷⁵ Official statistics published in January 2014 show that Gross Value Added (GVA) of the creative industries was measured at £17.4 million in 2012 and accounted for 5.2% of the British economy (DCMS 2014a). The report went on to state that from 2008-2012, GVA of creative industries increased by 15.6%, compared with an increase of 5.4% for the British economy as a whole. Creative industries therefore represent an extremely important, and growing, sector of the British economy.

The geographical dimensions of the industry however, have received little attention. Thomas *et al* (2010) suggests that despite the emergence of on-line technologies, like smart phones, tablets and social-media, which might infer an element of ‘placeless-ness,’ place is extremely important with regards to creative industries. In particular, they note that both local and international networks feature within, and are of value to creative businesses:

“Such strongly place-based creative industries may be localised, but this does not mean they are outside the international networks of production and consumption that characterise their sector” (2010: 15)

Thomas *et al* (2010) go on to describe the benefits associated with the ‘clustering’ of creative individuals and businesses within particular locales. These include sharing of talented labour, social environments, services and infrastructure, but also, in terms of creativity, allows for “the creative spark” (2010: 15) associated with interaction within a supportive environment. In terms of the Huntly community, it is not unrealistic to suggest that creative groups have begun to cluster within the local area.

Huntly is home to several successful and well-established community arts groups. In 2013 the town won Creative Scotland’s Creative Place Award for an area of up to 10,000 residents, an award that facilitated the establishment of Huntly Cultural Fund. The aim of the fund is to make Huntly a better place to live, work and visit by encouraging and supporting more creative activities (Huntly Cultural Fund 2014). One of the most notable groups within the area is Deveron Arts. Established in 1995, Deveron Arts is involved in many projects and provides residency opportunities to a wide range of visiting artists (Deveron Arts 2014a). Having no fixed location for their projects, the group is extremely active within Huntly community and proclaim the “town is the venue” (Deveron Arts

⁷⁵ The British Creative Industries comprise of the following sectors: Advertising and Marketing; Architecture; Crafts; Design (Product, Graphic and Fashion); Film, TV, Radio, Photography; IT, Software and Computer Services; Publishing; Museums, Galleries and Libraries; Music, Performing and Visual Arts (DCMS 2014b).

2014b). As a result, local businesses, public buildings and private residencies act as studio, stage and gallery for Deveron Arts projects and also offer a unique approach to community participation and integration. The Aurora Choir and Musical Productions is another example of a creative organisation that found support within Huntly. The choir was formed in 2011 in response to a Community Choir project organised by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and since then, has inspired the formation of several musical theatre productions, all performed in Huntly (Aurora Music 2014). Though several more creative and arts-based groups exist, one final example is the Huntly Writers. This long-running group provides regular creative writing workshops and have published two anthologies: *Spirit of the Deveron* and *Weaving Words*. In further demonstration of the progressive and dynamic nature of many of these creative groups, as well as opportunities afforded by the Huntly Cultural Fund, the Huntly Writers recently received funds to establish a not-for-profit community bookshop within the town centre (Huntly Writers 2014). These few examples of creative organisations demonstrate the benefits of ‘clustering’ as described by Thomas *et al* (2010). Many of these groups come together for annual festival events, notably the *Huntly Hairst* (a food and farming festival) and *Halloween in Huntly*. At these events, the sharing of labour, facilities and social environments is most evident and fuels creative enthusiasm. Though mentioned only briefly by participants, some of the members of the HMH walling group spoke positively of their experiences of such events and thus brought to my attention the extent to which individuals and groups interact with each other. As was noted earlier in the chapter, the multi-group visit to Finland further facilitated interaction between local organisations, opening up and strengthening networks of communication. Though the origins of the “Team Huntly” title are unknown, its creation renders groups as connected and supportive of each other.

The outcomes and emergent themes from a project based on connections between craft organisations and communities resonate significantly with Huntly. Thomas *et al* (2011) conducted a scoping study entitled “Connecting Craft and Communities” within the wider cross-council *Connected Communities Programme*.⁷⁶ The team of researchers conducted three two-day workshops entitled ‘crafting communities,’ ‘crafting futures’ and ‘crafting sustainability and wellbeing.’ The overall aim of the scoping project was to inspire discussions based on:

⁷⁶ The Connected Communities Programme is a cross-council project led by AHRC and supported by EPSRC, ESRC, MRC AND NERC. The aim is to better understand the changing nature of communities and their role in sustaining and enhancing quality of life (Connected Communities 2014).

“Developing an understanding of the role of craft in strengthening connections, enabling self-reliance, enhancing health and wellbeing and making sustainable economic futures” (Thomas *et al* 2011: 1).

In meeting this aim, the study also served to draw attention to the cultural, social, economic and political geographies of craft. Notably and with regard to the social dimensions of crafting, the report reflected on the value of craft in engaging with marginalised or hard-to-reach groups. It also went on to acknowledge the potential power of making on feelings of wellbeing and general life enhancement. However concerns were also expressed that the ‘making-as-therapy-model’ was too readily drawn upon, and at the expense of exploring the more deep-rooted issues relating to marginalised and vulnerable groups. These concerns are similar to those expressed by Parr (2007) noted earlier in the chapter. Such perspectives demonstrate that although creative and participatory practices play a role in the improvement of wellbeing and social inclusion, they cannot, and should not, be relied upon as the only means to do so.

In order to reliably reflect on the status of walling as a craft, it was necessary to first establish an understanding of the creative industries in Britain under which walling functions. It was suggested that walling may be considered a heritage and contemporary craft, a statement which will be developed further in the next section. Creative industries are considered an extremely important and growing part of the British economy and therefore must not be overlooked. As Thomas *et al* (2010) have shown, place, and the geographies established between similarly located creative businesses and organisations can enhance social, cultural and economic situations. Huntly, the location for the mental health walling group was therefore used as an example of a community which has become more connected through craft and creative practices.

Though perhaps a unique example of a craft, walling nonetheless demonstrates many of the familiar tenets associated with making; such as positive social interaction, the affordances of creativity and the opportunity to leave behind a legacy of the activities for the acknowledgement of future generations. As a result, walling has been shown to be a valued hobby, offering a unique perspective on creativity and place-making. However, it is impossible to separate (for the moment) professional and hobbyist dimensions if a complete rendering of walling craft culture is to be made. The following section considers the future of both the traditional and contemporary aspects of walling and the role played by organisations and individual practitioners.

Future of the Walling Craft

If dry-stone walling can be thought of as both heritage craft and contemporary craft, I want to make a case for the future of walling as a practice dependent upon this dual interpretation. Walling is considered a heritage craft by the Heritage Crafts Association, however there is no evidence of its designation or recognition as a contemporary craft. The Crafts Council takes a broad definition of what it considers to be a contemporary craft and does not outline the specific features or elements setting such examples apart from heritage or traditional forms. In a 2012 study, however, the Council attempts to draw a line between contemporary crafts and those of a more traditional character (Crafts Council 2012). Though a definitive reason for the division is not offered, the approach implies that it is possible to categorise craft types. This attempt however, was challenged by Creative Scotland, one of the project partners. Creative Scotland insisted makers who described their work as ‘indigenous’ and innovative in execution should be included in the study. Though once again there was no clarification on what ‘indigenous’ is intended to mean in relation to craft, it is presumed to have a link to heritage or tradition, possibly originating within a specific region of Scotland. Its inclusion within the study would therefore suggest that it is possible for a craft to have both heritage and contemporary elements. This duality is recognised in an earlier research project conducted on behalf of the Crafts Council on craft activity in England in Wales. Within the study it is noted that of the 2083 wallers surveyed during 2002-2003, 19% described themselves as both traditional and contemporary makers (McAuley and Fillis 2004). It is unfortunate that this statement was not discussed in sufficient detail to explain what encouraged makers to describe themselves in such a way. In understanding that it is possible for some crafts to possess both traditional and contemporary traits, I will make the case for dry-stone walling as one such example.

Chapter 4 showed that walling has a strong heritage in Britain. Owing to the simple techniques involved, many of the traditional skills remain within the practice today. It was evident from interviews with professional and amateur wallers that much of this history is known and respected by practitioners. For example, many of the tools have remained the same since the time of enclosures, with only minor technological amendments employed to simplify or ease some tasks. A commitment to the economical and efficient approach to work, developed by historical wallers on ‘piece’ rates, informs many of the working practices today.⁷⁷ However despite remaining ‘in touch’ with its historical roots, contemporary walling practice has moved away from the repair and construction of

⁷⁷ See Chapter 4: ‘Rates of Pay’ (p. 134) for clarification on the meaning of ‘piece’ rate.

agricultural boundaries, into the more attractive features found in community and private gardens. Chapter 5 also noted that among professionals interviewed, only 13% derived their income from agricultural work alone. Of the remainder, 30% were involved only in feature or garden wall construction, while the majority of 57% found work in a mixture of both agricultural and garden jobs. It is the case that walling in its most traditional form is found in the repair and rebuilding of agricultural walls. Contemporary features require creative input, attention to detail, and as a result, significantly more investment of time. Therefore for those wallers who derive income from both agricultural and ornamental feature construction, it is suggested that they are simultaneously heritage and contemporary craft workers, employed within two very different industries but using similar techniques in each. Dry-stone walling appears then to have two distinct craft dimensions, both of which are acknowledged and more importantly, reproduced by professional wallers.

It is also the case that the contemporary aspect of the practice has brought what was once a rural craft, into suburban and urban environments. Many of the professionals who worked on garden features mentioned that it was common to work in densely populated areas, with some almost entirely urban-based. Indeed it may be that the traditional, rural origins of walling have given rise to this geographical shift. It was noted in Chapter 5 that some customers wanted walling to feature in their garden because it gave them ‘a bit of the old world,’ implying that dry-stone has an aged quality. Certainly, as was mentioned previously, walling is a combination of simple, traditional techniques, most of which remain unchanged in the hundreds of years since the construction of the first enclosures. According to research conducted by the Crafts Council (2010), consumers find appeal in the perceived authenticity of many types of craft and admire the wealth of skill involved in their formation. It is also the case that part of the rural is sought in an urban environment. It was suggested by a professional that walling was like giving customers a touch of the ‘Yorkshire Dales in their back garden.’ This attempt to reproduce a particular landscape characteristic may also imply a romantic notion associated with a quest for the rural idyll. Though these implications originated from professionals and not customers directly, it is the case that savvy business owners must know their audience if they are to market their skills effectively. For such consumers, the appeal of walling lies in its heritage. People want to have something that looks traditional but is functional and aesthetically pleasing. It is these kinds of consumer desires that are drawing walling into the realm of contemporary craft.

It is important to note that the DSWA are in no way opposed to this development and play an important role in supporting both traditional and contemporary dimensions. The

establishment of the Professional Register of Wallers and the Craftsman Certification Scheme in the early 1980s demonstrates the commitment of the DSWA to the standardisation of walling skill. The DSWA fully recognises that small-scale garden features require more technically precise skills than agricultural walls. Within the Craftsman Certification Scheme the examinations pertaining to advanced and mastercraftsman status test candidates on the kinds of complex features that they are likely to encounter in ornamental constructions.⁷⁸ These features include, but are not limited to, curved walls, dry-stone steps and archways. Though the DSWA supports the more artistic and experimental aspects of walling, this is not to say they have renounced their traditional origins. On the contrary, the DSWA demonstrates a great deal of respect for its heritage. As an example, in the year 2000 they were involved in producing the Millennium Wall feature near Wirksworth in Derbyshire. This feature showcased nineteen styles of agricultural wall (and stone), all from different parts of Britain (DSWA 2002). The effect was to demonstrate both the geographical diversity of British walls but also provide an appreciation of their historical origins and how wallers of the past were able to use different types of stone effectively.

As well as using qualifications to standardise the professional dimension of the craft, the DSWA also recognises that hobbyists and amateurs play an important role. It was in 1982 that the DSWA first became aware of those wishing to participate in walling as a hobby and shortly after, began to offer two-day training courses at some of their regional branches. Though it has been suggested that some conflicts may exist between the hobbyist and professional obligations of the DSWA, it is recognised that hobbyists are extremely important to the overall function of the DSWA and its regional branches.⁷⁹ Many hobbyists are involved in branch committees and by way of membership, training and examination fees, contribute to the economic stability of both the branches and the Association at large. Like professionals, hobbyist and amateurs are encouraged by the DSWA to attend training courses and earn certificates. In standardising skills through examination and training, the DSWA ensures that the quality of workmanship remains high and is sustained into the next generation.

Hobbyist and amateur involvement does not stop with the DSWA. Other organisations and groups interested in walling also share a role in the support and development of the craft. Environmental organisations such as the National Trust (NT), its sister organisation the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) all provide

⁷⁸ See Chapter 4: 'Training and Education' (p. 146) for more information.

⁷⁹ See Chapter 5: 'Career Development' (p. 174) for more information.

training courses for those wishing to develop their skills. Most of these only last one or two days, but as a result of external funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the TCV project in which I participated lasted almost three years. As is explained in Chapter 3, it was the aim of the project to improve and invest in the historic environment as well as offer valuable skills opportunities for the conservation volunteers involved. The project involved the construction of new dry-stone features, but also the repair of older, agricultural dykes. The TCV hoped that groups of individuals brought together during the training events would continue to repair agricultural dykes beyond the end of the project. It is unclear whether this has happened, but in terms of the Huntly group it has certainly inspired individuals to become involved in other crafting projects, walling-related and beyond. In addition to training workshops, the NT and NTS also offer “working holiday” opportunities for those interested in dyking for longer periods of time. Within Scotland these holidays are run as part of the NTS Thistle Camps and in the past, have involved dyking courses in Aberdeenshire and Inverness-shire (NTS 2013). The participation of conservation volunteer groups is predominately focussed upon the repair and maintenance of agricultural walls. As was shown in Chapter 5, agricultural walling provides very little financial return for professionals, meaning that conservation groups and professionals are unlikely to ever be in competition. Indeed, it is the case that some professionals are able to gain from such workshops and holidays by being employed as instructors. These conservation-led projects showcase the more traditional aspect of walling practice, but in a way that incorporates a contemporary twist. Social objectives such as investment in skill, encouragement of environmentally active individuals and the improvement of health and wellbeing are creating a more holistic vision for the future.

Arguably, it is the developments in contemporary walling practices that have breathed new life into a profession that was once thought of as a dying trade. Walling in its traditional form could not have survived, particularly in light of reduced agricultural funding. The tradition and heritage associated with walling has allowed it to flourish as an attractive, desirable feature within private gardens and consequently, provided a market for highly qualified professionals. Though within the DSWA it was noted that there exists some tensions between the hobbyist and professional realms of the craft, in general it appears that both are capable of co-existing, sometimes with mutual benefit. It is the case however, that the walling craft as it exists today has been shaped by both hobbyist and professional participation. If consumer interest remains and support from the DSWA and other organisations continue, it seems likely that walling will endure as a valued craft for many years to come.

Conclusions

This chapter began by situating hobbyist and amateur walling practices in the context of outdoor activities that have the capacity to improve mental, physical and social wellbeing. Chapter 6 explored the ways in which the body and mind developed a level of 'fitness' in becoming engaged with the practice. This chapter, however, looked at walling practice more holistically, in terms of how it could positively impact on feelings of wellbeing; for example through improved confidence or social inclusion. From this foundation, three components were identified. The facilitative role of walling in encouraging people to work together promoted the development of what Sennett (2012) termed dialogic skills. By paying attention to verbal and non-verbal interactions, it was possible for the members of HMH group to work cooperatively and effectively together. In different groups however, tensions and frustrations between members had the potential to restrict activity progress. It became clear that working well as a group required that individuals were prepared to share. Sharing encompassed knowledge, tools, workload, physical strength and, on occasion, food. This also extended to a shared sense of experience, or 'atmosphere,' arising from interactions between human bodies and non-human matter. Taken together, the positive elements of collective interaction allowed for the development of feelings of confidence and belonging. The theme of wellbeing was further considered in relation to individual experiences of craft, creativity and making. Taking an approach to everyday creativity as defined by Gauntlett (2011) and Crouch (2009b), walling was considered to be an example of a craft that required a creative approach. For some walling participants, the activity was sufficiently engaging that it allowed a temporary distraction from disruptive thoughts or feelings. The discussion of making meaningful places was figured as a way of connecting the previous elements of group work and creative engagement. As evidenced by the HMH projects, the creation of a place or feature for others allows for the development of meaningful connections between various people and groups. The latter part of the chapter focussed on the wider aspect of making, that of craft culture. It proposes that walling exists in Britain as a heritage and contemporary craft, drawing strength and longevity from this duality. Similarly, walling skill, supported considerably by the DSWA, survives as a result of hobbyist and professional practice. Though there are some conflicts within these versions of the craft, it is suggested that it is these multi-dimensional circumstances that provide walling with sufficient interest and energy from which to sustainably continue for many years to come.

Chapter 8 : Conclusion

“‘A monument you might say.’

‘All the thought that’s circled Stonehenge, and the bringing of its rocks. Who puzzles over your tons of careful building?’

‘Who indeed.’” (Cracknell 2010: 25)

The lines above appear in *The Beat of Heart Stones* by poet and writer Linda Cracknell. In this small ‘pocket book’, Cracknell narrates the ascent of Schiehallion, an iconic mountain in the Highlands of Scotland. Though initially sparing little thought for the dry-stone dyke marking the line of ascent, the walker (with some ‘whispered words’ of encouragement from the stones), becomes engaged in a ‘conversation’ with the dyke. As she climbs, she asks questions of the wall’s history, its construction and of those who laboured to bring it into being. With each step taken up the steep mountainside the walker’s curiosity deepens, drawing attention to the monumental status of the dyke as it gives scale to the daunting terrain. Despite initial ignorance, the walker comes to cherish the dyke and its heart of stone, questioning why, given their extent in the British landscape, there is not more wonder over the ‘tons of careful building’ that gives rise to such momentous features.

This thesis responds to the question of ‘who indeed,’ having sought to explore and enliven the historical, cultural and social geographies of dry-stone walling practice in Scotland and beyond. In drawing the work towards a close, I want to offer some final reflections on the empirical and conceptual outcomes of the research. In what follows, I address the key theoretical contributions of this research, notably how it has responded to calls by Crang (2005) and Nash (2000) to do work *through* the body. Furthermore, I reflect on how the thesis enhances discussions around the under-explored geographies of creativity, making and craft.

To begin I consider how contemporary dry-stone cultures raise questions about the place of dry-stone walls and the wall-builder within the landscape. I then draw attention to my role as embodied creator and participant in the walling process, and make a case for research taking seriously knowledge developed through the body. In the final section, I consider the ‘afterlives’ of dry-stone walls, and also those of this thesis. I reflect on the limitations of

the study and outline how the outcomes of this research may contribute to recent discussions of ruination and ‘palliative curation’ within the context of landscape and cultural heritage (DeSilvey 2011; DeSilvey 2012).

The Changing Culture of Dry-Stone Walling

As I acknowledged in the thesis introduction, initially my approach to the project arose from the popular belief that dry-stone walling was a dying trade. However as I became critically engaged with the research, interviews with professional and amateur wallers revealed the dry-stone craft to be more complex than generally thought. As observed in Chapter 5, the contemporary dry-stone walling profession offers a challenge to popular perceptions of a craft in its twilight. Reduced availability of funding for the repair of agricultural walls, combined with increasing labour costs, have caused many landowners to seek cheaper fencing alternatives. Alone, this might result in the slow decline of skilled craftspeople, once dependent on farm walls for income. However a desire for ‘a touch of the Yorkshire Dales’ in private gardens, has since provided a new market for walling professionals.

Of the professionals interviewed, the vast majority (87%) worked either exclusively on ornamental features or a mixture of both farm and garden walls. The remaining professionals (13%) derived income only from agricultural work. These numbers demonstrate the geographical and economic changes occurring in the dry-stone trade since the end of the Second World War. A shift from the construction of rural boundaries to walls located in private gardens has introduced the craft to more urbanised areas. Correspondingly, the walling economy changed, with urban residents able and willing to pay significantly higher prices than those associated with the repair of agricultural walls. Furthermore, the establishment of this new ‘garden’ market has implications for the quality and type of walls being constructed. Though still founded on the building techniques and traditions established during the enclosures period, ornamental walling is also concerned with aesthetics. While agricultural walling uses stones extracted from the earth, a garden wall requires stone sourced from a quarry, where colour, texture, size, cost and intended purpose are factored into choice. In Chapter 5, it was noted by a professional that pale coloured sandstone was favoured, to ensure that a formerly gloomy garden would look bright and inviting. In ornamental garden features, stones are thus chosen for aesthetic purposes and laid in careful and precise ways to further enhance the visual appeal of the wall. In addition to garden boundary walls, ornamental dry-stone work is highly creative, allowing the construction of features such as seats, tables, steps and bridges. Furthermore

in recognition of the traditional techniques used to construct ornamental dry-stone structures, it is now the case that walling in Scotland and the rest of the British Isles is both a heritage *and* contemporary craft. Combined with support from the DSWA and other walling organisations, as noted in Chapter 7, the dual nature of walling contributes to the vibrancy, longevity and resilience of the dry-stone craft.

However despite the recognition of dry-stone heritage, the desire for creative features within gardens leads to questions around the place of *walls* within the current dry-stone profession. As the craft has developed, an increasing focus has been placed on the aesthetic and creative dimensions of dry-stone. Though garden retaining walls and boundaries remain common jobs for professionals, such types of enclosure possess a different meaning to those associated with agricultural walls. Boundaries around farmland and properties were built in response to changing agricultural practices and consequential amendments to ownership and grazing rights. Naylor (2011) suggests that particularly in Britain, walls, fences and hedges are celebrated and cherished features of the rural environment. These perceptions go a long way to explaining the attraction of dry-stone features, however as has been demonstrated in this thesis such attitudes “obscure a contested history of enclosure” (Naylor 2011: 36). In numerous places around the world, enclosure has resulted in dispossession and exclusion from indigenous lands, demonstrating a distinct lack of what Oles describes as an “ethics of enclosure” (2015: 159). Yet, today, we no longer question these ethics. Rather than being perceived as symbols of historic dispossession, the ‘patch-work’ images of dry-stone walls in places like the Yorkshire Dales evoke a sense of comfort and homeliness. Naylor (2011) remarks upon this ambiguity of enclosure, drawing attention to changing perceptions of what humans consider good or bad practice. By constructing walls and other dry-stone features in private and community gardens, the ambiguity and ethics surrounding these structures remain embedded in their formation.

A further demonstration of how walling culture has developed since the early 20th century is evident in the range of people who have become engaged in the craft. In addition to professionals, walling is now well established as an amateur, hobbyist and voluntary pursuit. Since its formation in 1968, the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain has had significant influence upon the social and cultural geographies of the craft. Regional branches of the DSWA comprise of part-time and full-time professionals, but also a high number of amateurs who practice at various skill levels. With the main aim of the DSWA to promote the knowledge and understanding of the craft, training events, demonstrations and qualifications are available nationally, and in some cases,

internationally. Professional and highly qualified practitioners therefore provide instruction to individuals who wish to develop their dry-stone skills. As outlined in Chapter 5, the opinions of some craftspeople suggest minor tensions in the professional and hobbyist obligations of the DSWA. Though all professionals interviewed expressed support for hobbyists, some pointed out that weekend branch events often clashed with personal and family commitments. Others suggested that after a week of full-time walling, a weekend of instruction, whether paid or unpaid, was something they preferred to avoid. In this respect, it is clear that professional and amateur practices are tightly woven within contemporary walling cultures. Though these social variations contribute to the strength and sustainability of the craft, they do not always run together fluently.

Voluntary and community activities further contribute to the social diversity of walling practice. Though such activities take place regularly throughout Britain, this thesis is unique in providing a detailed examination of the craft of walling and its influence on the mental and physical wellbeing of practitioners. As had been reported by amateurs, and on occasion professionals, walling practice has the capacity to function as a therapeutic activity. As a result of sustained ethnographic engagement primarily (but not exclusively) with organisations such as the Aberdeenshire branch of The Conservations Volunteers (TCV) and Huntly Mental Health (HMH), I have closely examined the original data to establish the main methods by which practitioners reported influences upon feelings of wellbeing. Within the context of the HMH project, walling activities were noted for their positive influence, particularly in relation to cooperative working, creative engagement and the construction of meaningful community spaces. As a result, some participants demonstrated heightened confidence levels and an improved sense of social inclusion. Though the study of voluntary and community walling is unique to this thesis, these outcomes are in accordance with observations by Cattell *et al* (2008) and Smith *et al* (2010) asserting the positive social impacts of community and voluntary participation.

Furthermore, it was possible to bolster Andrews' *et al* (2014) claim that non-representational theories of affect are useful in understanding how environments, social interaction and engagement with non-human matter all impact upon wellbeing. In relation to a sense of shared atmosphere between participants, it was noted that positive feelings of wellbeing *arose as* environment, and not, as Andrews *et al* (2014) point out, something which is taken *from* environment. Though Anderson (2009) notes that the idea of an affective atmosphere unsettles the distinctions between theories of affect and emotion, I suggest that it helpfully illustrates the relationship between walling and wellbeing. It was observed that trans-personal affective intensities existing between walling participants and

non-human matter were capable of influencing, enhancing and on occasion, altering personal emotions. As a consequence, such personal emotions become embedded within the walling process and inscribed in the stones of a completed wall.

The idea of a dry-stone wall or feature as an embodied and emotional landscape legacy was common to all social groups involved in the practice. Professional, amateur and hobbyist wallers regarded a completed dry-stone structure as a physical testament to the technique, traditions and effort involved in construction. Following Sennett (2008), a dry-stone wall, like other craft-pieces, is the way by which a craftsman makes their presence in the world known. The thesis has also contributed to the debate around the performative nature of landscape. As such, it has demonstrated how embodied and emotional legacies should not be figured as ‘made upon’ or ‘etched into’ landscape. Rather, dry-stone walling is conceptualised as an “embodied act of landscaping” (Lorimer 2005: 85) through which “self, landscape and culture itself inhere, circulate and emerge” (Wylie 2007: 166). In other words through the practice of walling, embodied and emotional legacies created by crafts-people are woven into the social, cultural and physical geographies of landscape and place. Furthermore, legacies are not limited to the specific construction of agricultural walls, but are created through all forms of dry-stone work, including ornamental structures within private or community gardens. Whether contemporary or historical, dry-stone walling is constitutive of landscape, contributing to the ways in which it is made meaningful and physically tangible.

In striving to build a comprehensive new geography of the dry-stone wall, this work has demonstrated how contemporary walling culture is greatly influenced by the diverse social groups engaged in the craft. Though professional, amateur, hobbyist and volunteer practitioners have varying reasons for involvement, all are interlinked in the production of the social, economic and cultural geographies of dry-stone walling. Despite occasional tensions between different types of practitioner, it is evident that social diversity plays a significant role in ensuring a sustainable future for the craft. In recognition of this, the thesis has paid particular attention to the embodied act of walling, both in relation to practitioners, and as a method of doing research.

Uncovering ‘Walling’ in Dry-Stone Walls

To analyse knowledge practices and specialist techniques integral to dry-stone walling, a phenomenological approach has been adopted here. This has allowed for direct engagements with the embodied, emotional and multi-sensual dimensions of walling practice. Personal engagement, and investment, in the activity also afforded me insight

into the ways in which dry-stone knowledge and skill is effectively transmitted between craftspeople, most notably from instructor to student. Early in Chapter 6 I outlined the importance of discursive forms of communication when becoming familiar with walling practice. Drawing on Philo's (2011) arguments about discursive life, I noted that words and representational forms of communication are vital tools for negotiating interactions between people, objects, spaces and places. In relation to walling, words of instruction (and occasionally diagrammatic representations) provided by an experienced craftsman, were the primary methods by which myself and other novices established a basic understanding of how to construct a wall. However, I also noted that as we continued, our understanding of stone was no longer guided solely by representational forms of communication. Though words of instruction or encouragement were occasionally still necessary, knowledge of the activity began to develop *through* the body. Common metaphors such as 'getting and eye or a feel for the stones' directed attention to an embodied approach to dry-stone crafts. In recognition of this, it was necessary to acknowledge more-than-representational forms of craft knowledge acquired through the body and senses.

Guided by the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002), the thesis approached embodiment as a meeting of body and mind, where the physical and emotional self is entwined and inseparable. This concept was strengthened by the theories of Serres (2008) and Tilley (2004), in which a blending of the senses was described as the primary means of engaging in the world. Together these concepts provided a sensuous imperative from which to interrogate the practice of walling. As a result, interview and participatory research proved walling to be a multi-sensual activity, requiring a comprehensive education of the mind, body and senses. Such an education was considered a response to the vital properties of stone, in which the craftsman comes to regard stone as a flexible material. Enhanced by the work on vital matter by Bennett (2010) and lines of force and flow by Ingold (2010), it was possible to show how the educated waller develops skills which work *with* stone, rather than against it. It was subsequently determined that as the craftsman became increasingly familiar with walling, a level of 'fitness', encompassing body, mind and senses was established. This level of embodied fitness was further characterised by a state of being known as 'flow', described by Csikszentmihalyi (2002) as a deep sense of exhilaration, enjoyment and control of physical actions.

In drawing together these ideas and approaches, this thesis addresses disciplinary calls by Crang (2005) and Nash (2000) for geographers to do participatory and practice-led research by focussing not on the body as subject, but as a medium *through* which we

engage in the world. Such research challenges conventional approaches to ‘new’ cultural geography based on the extraction of meaning and interpretation of value from a range of representational forms (Thrift 2000). Attention is therefore directed away from the ‘what’ and towards the ‘how’. In recent years a number of human geography scholars have sought to respond to this invitation by exploring practice-based (Wylie 2006), performative (Lorimer 2012; Richardson-Ngwenga 2014), non- (or more-than) representational (Thrift 2000; Lorimer 2005) and affect-based (Conradson 2005) forms of research. This thesis therefore capitalises upon such effort by employing similar principles to take a unique look at dry-stone walling practice. In doing so, I myself grew attuned to the craft knowledge acquired and transferred through my body, in ways that move beyond, or are more-than representational forms of communication.

In addition to my commitment to learn through doing, walling also positioned me as a creative researcher, engaged in the practice of making. Working alongside the participants of HMH and other walling groups, I was witness to (and invested in) the creation of not only dry-stone features, but also new material geographies, built around social, cultural and environmental themes. In terms of HMH, the formation of social networks, both between individuals and across community groups, was evidenced throughout the life of the project. As a creative endeavour, the walling project also contributed to Huntly’s well-established community arts and crafts culture. Thomas *et al* (2010) recognise such initiatives as the creative industries clustering effect, where benefits such as the sharing of talented labour, resources and infrastructure support the development of additional creative individuals and businesses. The construction of community spaces, such as community gardens in Huntly and Callander also create new geographies associated with embodied and emotional attachments to place. To return to the theme of cultural legacy, Ingold (2000) notes that landscape is an enduring record of the lives of those who dwell within it, and in so doing, have left there something substantial in place. Within the context of community walling, the construction of durable dry-stone structures facilitate the creation of meaningful attachments to place. As DeSilvey and Naylor note, the consideration of attachments to place (or lack thereof) can have considerable implications for how we regard the environment and make decisions about its future:

“Those who make decisions about landscape futures need to be sensitive to how people know the past in place – the dense weave of individual memories, shared experiences, and personally significant landmarks that makes up our understanding of where we are, and where we have been.” (2011: 15)

In recognition of this statement, it is evident that embodied and emotional attachments to place are not only relevant historically and in the present, but also influence how we make sensitive decisions about the future of our environments. DeSilvey and Naylor further note that such a position permits “no singular, authoritative historical narrative” (2011: 15), thus allowing the development of a democratic approach for how we regard the environment and plan for its future.

In recent years there has been increasing interest in craft, creativity and making practices within social science and arts and humanities disciplines (Csikszentmihalyi 1997, 2002; Sennett 2008; Ingold 2010; Charny 2011; Gauntlett 2011), as well as public policy (Crafts Council 2010, 2012; Bertram 2013; DCMS 2014a). Human geographers have also engaged with creative communities and industries (Thomas *et al* 2010; 2013; Warren and Gibson 2014), materiality and embodied making (Paton 2013) and creative practice (Edensor *et al* 2009; Hawkins 2014, 2015). However despite these notable geographical endeavours, there is still significant scope for further exploration of the geographies of craft, creativity and making. This thesis is therefore presented in response to such conceptual gaps, and contributes to the research and literature within these under-developed geographies. It has drawn upon a craft practice, once recognised as a traditional rural trade, and demonstrated how changes in British agriculture, the economy, public interest in craft and organisational involvement has led to the re-structuring of dry-stone walling within a contemporary context. Walling now exists as a socially diverse endeavour, with part-time and full-time professionals, amateurs, hobbyists and voluntary practitioners engaged in making dry-stone walls and artistic features. For some of those who consider themselves hobbyist wallers, the practice incorporates a therapeutic dimension, strengthening individual confidence levels, contributing to physical and mental wellbeing and developing social networks. Walling is also noted for its role in community place-making and the creation of meaningful landscape legacies and attachments to place. As evidenced by the wealth of influence offered in the study of dry-stone walling practice, this thesis not only bolsters the geographies of making and creativity, but also encourages the exploration of other forms of craft and creative ventures. Recent work by Thomas *et al* (2010; 2011; 2013), Mann (2015) and Price (2015) has highlighted the scope for further valuable research on the multiple geographies of craft. Avenues for investigation include, but are not limited to: engagement with craft histories and cultures; the economies of crafting; social dimensions associated with craft practice; and the political power of making and creating. As suggested by Thomas *et al* (2011), future research must also concern the materialities and socialities associated with online communities and networks.

The role of craft bloggers and social media platforms such as *Pinterest* and *YouTube* might offer valuable opportunity for considering the ways in which new enthusiasms for making and creating develop.

The Afterlives of Dry-Stone Walls

The main focus of this thesis has been upon the (re)creation of functional dry-stone features by a variety of practitioners, both within historical and contemporary contexts. In recognition of the geographical diversity of dry-stone work, complementary research might suitably expand to consider the social, economic and cultural variations of practice beyond the British Isles. However another opportunity for future research includes the consideration of the afterlives of dry-stone walls, particularly those within the rural landscape. Originally built to enclose livestock and designate property boundaries, this thesis has noted how walls are markers of changes to 17th and 18th century agricultural, economic, social and political agendas. Testament to their durable construction technique, many of these walls and those built in the 19th and early 20th centuries continue to weave through rural landscapes today. Though durable, the condition of such enclosure walls varies significantly. Some are no longer livestock-proof and are lined by fences of wood or wire. Others are in such an advance state of disrepair that the earth has begun to reclaim fallen stones, uncovering the organic nature of walls. A potential study of their ‘Afterlives’ therefore considers what becomes of dry-stone walls once they no longer function as agricultural enclosures.

Since engaging in this project, I have become increasingly interested in the question of whether it is necessary or appropriate to repair tumbledown walls. If the question is considered from an economic perspective, once an agricultural wall begins to fail the cost of repair can be prohibitive for many landowners. However, recent work by Thomas Oles suggests that an “ethics of enclosure” (2015: 159) might be applied to all types of wall, including those that mark agricultural, geographical or political boundaries. An ethics of enclosure asks direct questions of the wall and for what it stands, bringing issues of functionality, porosity, social interaction and political significance to the table. Oles relates his suggestion to the central theme of Robert Frost’s poem, ‘Mending Wall’, in which two neighbours are engaged in the repair of the stone wall separating their properties. Questions are raised about the place of the wall if it no longer serves a purpose:

“The disappearance of that original benefit opens up the possibility that the two men should allow the wall to disintegrate into non-existence” (Oles 2015: 159)

Though I hesitate to agree that a wall decays into ‘non-existence’, I am intrigued by the idea of allowing the wall to fall into ruin. Fundamental to this thesis is the acknowledgement of the temporality of landscape, as primarily described by Ingold (2000), but also demonstrated in the work of Cloke and Jones (2001), Rose and Wylie (2006), Pearson (2006) and Wylie (2007). The concept of ruination further emphasises temporality, where landscape is in an unending process of becoming. During research at a derelict Montana homestead, DeSilvey (2006) explores entropy in relation to residual traces of material culture. She notes that the degradation of cultural artefacts is usually accompanied by a belief that through the process of decay, cultural information is lost. Despite this perception however, DeSilvey considers whether it is possible to think what knowledge can be *gained* from the process of ruination. In other work, DeSilvey suggests that the concepts of “palliative curation” (2011: 56) and “managed ruination” (2012: 49), might reconfigure what is ‘lost’ or ‘gained’ from the permitted disintegration of cultural artefacts and landscape features.

Such revisionist thinking might have application when considering the ‘afterlives’ of dry-stone walls. As a final point of reflection, I am reminded of one particular wall, one that I frequently pass by and rank as a favoured dry-stone feature (See Figure 8-1). The wall in question is no longer fully functional and at various points along its length, is almost consumed by the earth. In spite of this, or perhaps as a result, I find this dyke to be an engaging and intriguing example of the dry-stone craft. To me, it is graceful in its disintegration – still possessing elements of its former purpose and by way of an exposed heart, discloses the secrets of its construction. In some ways a decaying dry-stone wall might tell us as much as one that is still fully functional. It can show us how it was made, but also why it has fallen. It tells of agricultural, social or economic reform, where purposeful walls are surplus to requirement. Ultimately however, it speaks of environmental change and cultural progression, reminding us that human life and ordinary practices are as complicit in the creation of landscape, as much as it is part of us.



**Figure 8-1: Dry-stone dyke in ruination. Craigengillan Estate, East Ayrshire, Scotland.
(Photo by author.)**

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