

West of Scotland Dry Stone Walling Association

Beginners - Dry Stone Walling Course



Scottish Charity SCO 39439

Course Organisation

The courses are run over a 2 day weekend at various sites, for example, Auchenofoyle, Cardross, or at our test site at Kilsyth. Kilsyth is very convenient for people travelling from the east.

The courses are supervised by qualified instructors. Our instructors have several years of experience in walling construction and training; they will oversee the training, answer questions and provide advice throughout the duration of the course.

We have conducted courses and demonstrations for a number of outside agencies, such as The Forestry Commission, the Agricultural Training Board and the Royal Highland Society and local community organisations. We also work closely with Historic Scotland and have exhibited at Gardening Scotland, Edinburgh for a number of years.

The courses start at 09.00 each day and usually finish at around 16.00 depending on the progress of the build and the conditions on the day. There will be provision of toilet facilities and there will be suitable breaks throughout the day for lunch and refreshments.

The details of the current course dates and how to get to the training site can be found on the training page of our website www.wsdswa.org.uk.

Course Application

The courses are limited to a maximum of 20 per course, and we normally run 3 to 4 courses per year. They are very popular and are quickly booked.

The course fee is non-refundable in the event of cancellation by the applicant, however may be able to find a place on a subsequent course subject to availability.

To apply and book a place on a course, please follow the application/payment process which can be found on the Training page of our website www.wsdswa.org.uk.

Course Requirements

The courses are open to anyone over the age of 16. Although the course will involve the lifting and placing of stones, no special level of fitness is required and we regularly train men and women from the age of 16 to 70. The training will focus on the skills involved in dry stone walling, it is not a test of strength, and if a stone is too heavy to lift the golden rule is to ask for help.

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Please note that some courses are run on a private estate and we require that the following be observed at all sites:-

- No children under the age of 16 are allowed to attend the course.
- No dogs are allowed on the site.
- Parking should be on the roadways only and not the verges.
- Refuse – food, plastic etc. should be removed at the end of each day.

All the walling tools and equipment will be provided. However you do need to provide your own work wear and refreshments as follows:-

- Sturdy working clothes
- Wet weather gear – it can get wet even in summer
- Stout footwear; if possible, boots with reinforced or steel toecaps
- A pair of cheap industrial gloves
- A packed lunch and something to drink – especially on hot days
- A folding chair is optional – if you have one and want a nice place to sit during breaks

Course Programme

It is highly recommended that you read the Beginners Guide to Dry Stone Walling prior to attending the course, as it will cover the main aspects of wall construction and the terms that will be used. This can be found on the training page of our website www.wsdswa.org.uk.

A typical work programme for the Course Weekend is as follows:-

Day 1

The course will start with an introduction to the site, and the area where the build will take place. This is followed by a safety talk on how to work safely with the materials, tools and other trainees. It is important for your safety and of the other trainees that you pay particular attention to the safety talk and take the advice of the instructors during the course.

There will then be a short presentation on the method of dry wall construction, the terms used, and any specific areas of the build that need to be covered during the weekend. The course is very “hands on” and the emphasis is to learn by doing under the supervision of the instructors.

The rest of the day will cover the practical construction of the wall as follows:-

- Strip and layout the existing wall - ensuring the stones correctly laid out for reconstruction
- Set out the dimensions and framework for the rebuilt wall – ensuring the wall conforms to the required dimensions
- Prepare the ground and layout the foundations – ensuring the foundations are stable and suitable for subsequent courses of stone
- Build the wall to about half height in even courses – ensuring the wall is suitable for the through band stones

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Day 2

Depending on progress from Day 1, the wall should be at through band level, which is half way up the total height of the wall. Any corrections to the wall will be made prior to proceeding, which will be as follows:-

- Continue to construct the wall from through band height in even courses, generally using smaller stones to achieve an even course height.
- Level off the top of the wall below the coping stones - to ensure a level base for the coping stones.
- Lay the coping stones on the top of the wall – ensuring an even profile to the top of the wall
- Finish the wall – by filling gaps and securing loose stones with small pinning stones
- Clear the site – ensuring the area around the wall is clear, unused stones are piled ready for future use and wall is secure.

Course Information

Most of the information that you will need to find out about the course and how to apply for a place is on the Training Page of our website www.wsdswa.org.uk

If you need further information on specific questions, then please contact us at the following e mail address enquiries@wsdswa.org.uk