

# Carrefour

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### Dry-stone: a strong link between Scottish, Cypriot, Spanish, French and Greek stone workers

From 15th to 18th April 2004, the protagonists of the European Dry-Stone Forum met at Tinos in the Cyclades to evaluate early results of the projects and discuss future perspectives.

We have already confirmed what it is that gives the Forum its impetus – dry-stone is a wonderful link between professionals from Scotland, Cyprus, Spain, France and Greece.

Beyond the achievements whose first steps are described in this letter, I want to underline in this editorial the quality and enthusiasm of our relationships. Since we started out on this cultural adventure in May 2003, we have had so many great times together!

> Restoring the sheepfolds of the Lure mountains in France where wallers passionately compared their techniques under the guidance of the masterful Philippe Alexandre.

> Tinos worksite in Greece where young people from six different countries were introduced to dry-stone walling by a team led by Yannis Psaltis.

> A wonderful encounter for the Dumfries training session in Scotland, where a team from the Forum built a 25 metre wall in five days under the leadership of master builder Jimmy.

> Restoration training worksite in Serra Tramuntana on Majorca, where we discovered the amazing work of our partner organisation FODESMA.

All these encounters consolidated the Forum on the basis of strong links between individuals with hands-on experience in the field, bringing Europe into focus for the local population thanks to the involvement of people who work creatively in a branch for which we are beginning to achieve recognition thanks to the Culture 2000 programme.

Dry-stone walling in Europe now has its crafts-guild. That was our primary objective.

Jean-Baptiste Lanaspèze  
Director of the CME

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Education and culture

### Culture 2000



Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur



## Reporting on a year of hard work

**T**he European Dry-stone Forum has given itself the objective of better identifying dry-stone professionals throughout Europe and helping them get organised. It also aims to improve public awareness of the rural dry-stone heritage and the importance of preserving it, at the European level and among local government representatives. Information tools and documents are produced to reflect this double objective.

### Professionals at work in the project's partner territories are setting up networks for effective exchange within Europe.

> The inventory of professionals that is currently open to the five partner territories will soon become a real Europe-wide directory of wallers. It will be available online thanks to the website of the European Dry-Stone Forum. Although the current inventory does not apply any conditions for inclusion in the list, the end objective is to acknowledge the crafts-people who are most committed and to focus on those who comply with the European Charter of dry-stone wallers.

> A charter was proposed during the final seminar in Tinos, so that the professionals who attended could approve it. This charter states the ethical principles and the professional requirements that should characterise all good wallers, consciously or unconsciously: the requirement to train and transfer unique skills, a particular relationship to the land and the scenery, etc. The charter aims to get community decision-makers to acknowledge the quality of dry-stone techniques, by making use of the experimental protocol set up in France by the state-run Ecole Nationale des Travaux Public (national school of public engineering) to test the resistance of dry-stone constructions.

> Finally, a inventory of current practices in partner regions has been carried out, with the aim of identifying reference techniques in terms of dry-stone construction, with the European Dry Stone Forum trying to set up a real technical cooperation between professionals from different countries. In the end, it is hoped that this will become an inventory of European dry-stone techniques. This cooperation is of course based on a variety of meetings and encounters (Dalbeattie-Scotland, Sault-Provence, and Majorca) which

have encouraged technical collaboration on a practical level.

These initiatives are being carried out by the "European Dry Stone Forum" created in Tinos, with Yannis Psaltis nominated as president.

### Public acknowledgement of dry-stone heritage and wallers is improving.

We have decided to carry out several work projects simultaneously in order to better achieve this major objective:

> To acquaint local inhabitants with their dry-stone heritage: the various activities launched in Tinos (week-end work camps, family discovery outings, schools work), as well as communication with the local media concerning professional training and meetings (in Sault, Majorca or Scotland) have attempted to reach these objectives.

> To raise awareness throughout Europe of the importance of preserving dry-stone heritage and its original techniques: a purposefully simple educational exhibition and an easy access website have been set up to this end [www.carrefour-europeen-pierreseche.org](http://www.carrefour-europeen-pierreseche.org)

> To help local officials appreciate the importance of preserving heritage features in order to benefit local development: a document to assist in decision-making procedures and in setting out a methodology for defining projects for developing local heritage.

> To guarantee the organisation and quality of training in terms of construction techniques as well as raising awareness in Europe: based on Majorca's long experience and Scotland's expertise, a reference programme for training European young people and providing them with formal qualifications is now available.

Also available: a training programme for instructors and professional training personnel from the building industry who want to qualify in dry-stone techniques is undergoing evaluation in Provence.

All of these activities remain understandably limited in geographical scope (however rich and diversified the partner regions, they only represent a small portion of Europe's dry-stone heritage) as well as in terms of the short time-spans that have been granted for establishing the programmes.

Of course, they still need to be completed, adapted, and made available throughout Europe, complemented by the differences as well as the common features of new territories and regional partner organisations who catch the vision.

The big programme – the one that aims to achieve Europe-wide recognition for the heritage and those who carry it – has only just begun. ■

Majorca



© Niro Martínez

## Adopt a local strategy for raising awareness of dry-stone heritage.

### A strategic plan for use by local authorities.

A growing number of local development initiators are aware that dry-stone heritage is part of what gives value to a region. Preserving it and developing it must however not stop at the restoration of a few buildings. What is needed is a comprehensive development programme that can be coordinated in order to contribute to sustainable local development.

The strategic plan set up by the European Dry-Stone Forum aims to help local authorities integrate this heritage into their development perspective by way of a local project. This should take account of both the long-term economic viability and the social and cultural requirements, whilst taking account of ecological balance imperatives.

Although this strategic plan is primarily aimed at local officials and city councils, it also hopes to attract the attention of cultural professionals in rural contexts, promoters of cultural tourism and other groups involved in the sustainable development of territories with dry-stone architecture.

### What are the components of this strategic plan?

The strategic plan is both a methodological guide and a tool box. Its content is based on the expertise of the different partner organisations of the Forum. It presents seven main focal points that each consist in methodological orientations and a certain number of tools to assist decision-makers:

- > A goal strategy aimed at carrying out an inventory of existing features and analysing needs and potential responses.
- > An integration strategy, aimed at defining a local project.
- > A management strategy, to organise the necessary partnerships and set out the required procedures for implementing the project.
- > A practical work strategy for carrying out the restoration and upkeep required by the characteristics of dry-stone heritage.
- > A resources strategy, to define the human and material means that are needed to carry out the project.
- > A participation strategy that raises the awareness of the local population and involves them in the local project.
- > An evaluation strategy, because it is vital to determine the degree of efficiency of past procedures in order to further develop the project.

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The training workshop for instructors in Majorca

These seven focal points are interdependent and constitute a comprehensive set-up that can lead to a sustainable local project. Carrying out the restoration work and publishing an information brochure, for instance, will not have a beneficial long-term effect on local development if they are carried out without an overall coherent project. Furthermore, this plan proposes a concrete example of an integrated project, with a list of useful indicators for evaluating the strategy being implemented. ■

The strategic plan is available in English, Spanish, French and Greek by contacting :

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## The training workshop for instructors Majorca - Spain

From 16th to 25th of February 2004, wallers from the 5 partner regions of the Forum took part in a workshop for professionals interested in passing on their expertise. Their objective was to discover the technique employed in Majorca and exchange experiences in the area of passing on their know-how. Although the participants all had developed good technical skills, they needed to adapt to the specific context of Majorca: the lithic rock on the island and the unfavourable

Majorcan climate at that time of year.

The island of Majorca was naturally chosen for this workshop because the insular Council of Majorca set up a wallers' school in 1986: la Escuela de Marges de Mallorca. The State's purpose in setting up this institution was to help young job-seekers by training teachers to specialise in dry-stone techniques and restore and develop the remarkable dry-stone architecture of the island. Students acquire their practical knowledge by working on specific features of the Majorcan heritage, at the same time as they join the wallers guild of the area. Antonia Theodosiou, from the Cypriot association Ecognosia, followed this experience and acted as a reporter for the Forum.

As for construction techniques practised in Majorca, participants were able to observe that stone-cutting played a major part in the process, with the stones laid in a diagonal inclination which is rare in France and Greece.

The teaching methods used in the Escuela de Marges de Mallorca surprised participants in terms of the tight supervision of the master builder providing the training, who kept a close eye on the work of each student. This approach is due to the particularly situation of some of the young trainees who need close supervision.

After workshops in Scotland and in Provence (see the Forum's 1st Newsletter), the comparison between regional techniques continues to surprise participants, as well as broadening their experience and providing new ideas. ■



© Anastasia Psalti

Tinos

**For many years, the techniques of dry stone walling were passed on to the next generation through practice.**

*"Since my childhood I have been in contact with dry stone constructions because our family farming business needed to survive and evolve. Each autumn, under the guidance of my father, we restored the supporting walls which separated our plots of land into cultivated terraces. I watched my father and his friends with interest and admiration as they built a stable with big stone walls which sloped inwards and met at the summit, leaving just a small opening which they covered with large slabs of limestone.*

*In parallel, I learned in school, thanks to the input of some valuable visionary people, the value of stone, the role of cultivated terraces in retaining the earth, and the creation, from nothing, of agricultural land. I shared in their worries about the condition of these supporting walls after violent weather conditions such as heavy rain and I felt the urgent need for their reconstruction when they collapsed."*

Yannis Psaltis, Tinos - Greece

**But this method of transferring knowledge has all but disappeared. The evolution of the rural world has resulted in many dry stone buildings being abandoned and in the craft's knowledge gradually being lost.**

*"Personally, the practice of building dry stone supporting walls posed no problem for me; however, the coverings, arches and cupola were a total mystery. Thanks to a proposal from the APARE, I supervised the first restoration work camp on a sheepfold, the dry stone arch of which had to be taken apart and rebuilt on an adapted frame. That marked the beginning of my dry-stone expertise. The need for methods with which to pass on information and techniques required for carrying out the work with young people who had no building experience, encouraged me to research all existing information concerning dry stone walling. Unfortunately, only historical and archaeological monographs were available. These were sufficient for raising public awareness but not technical enough to use in training."*

Philippe Alexandre, Provence - France

*"Interest from young people in dry stone construction has grown in recent years, but it is mostly the older craftsmen in the villages who are active."*

Marios Loizides - Cyprus

**Today, new training methods are being developed. New motivations encourage stone-workers to specialize in these techniques.**

*The owner sent me to train in dry stone techniques for two weeks with a legendary waller in Galloway, so that I could maintain the walls on the property. I became so interested by the work that I left my job and became an independent wall builder."*

Jimmy Scott, Scotland - United Kingdom

*"I learnt to build walls at the FODESMA waller's school. At 22 years of age, after two years at university and a couple of administrative jobs, I had come to realise I could not work shut inside... I had a friend who was working on the restoration of the 'Cami Vell de Lluç' road and who introduced me to the idea of learning the craft of wall builder with the FODESMA. Training lasted two years, then I went on to work with a unit of the Majorcan regional council. After this, I decided to work independently for a time. Along with two friends from the wallers' school, we have now set up our own business."*

Guillem Palou Mas, Majorca - Spain

**For example, the love of stone...**

*"The desire to build is essential. Contrary to the use of industrial materials, work on a dry stone wall advances very slowly. It's a different state of mind, which not everyone has, and which makes all the difference (...) The pleasure to be had from building walls comes from the fact that an aesthetically pleasing result can be obtained with basic materials. Also the work has passion, each stone must find its place."*

Christian Emery, Cévennes - France

**Or the love of nature...**

*"The greatest satisfaction I get from my job is to be able to work in the open air. The possibility of contributing to the preservation of our dry stone heritage is also important. On the other hand, the worst aspect of the job is the physical exhaustion - it's tiring work."*

Guillem Palou Mas, Majorca - Spain

**...admiration of heritage.**

*"I was literally charmed by the cultivated*

## Waller's Words of Wisdom

terraces which, according to the variations in level, firmly held the mountains and hills from sea level to the summits, girding the land of Tinos and creating a unique landscape. Dry stone walls, whether they are fencing walls or supporting walls, shelters, threshing floors, stone hives, roads, pigeon coops, etc., make up a landscape heritage which we must protect and develop. I work voluntarily but dynamically to spread this idea and with other collaborators we try to convince mayors, councils and the state of the need to preserve the landscape for the future with the perspective of a different type of development"

Yannis Psaltis, Tinos - Greece

### Waller's pass on their experience

"I lead the initial training course for the Dry Stone Walling Association, mostly on weekends. A two day course costs participants about fifty euros. I also do week long courses for a local agricultural school on a contract basis, that course being aimed at farmers and the personnel of private domains."

Jimmy Scott, Scotland - United Kingdom

"After running discovery workshops for primary schools, I worked with professionals from historical monument companies, introducing them to dry stone construction. These days I provide training for craftsmen in the building trade."

Philippe Alexandre, Provence - France

**The situation varies from one country to another, here the population may be informed, there people may know nothing of dry stone heritage.**

"I participate in the organisation and practical aspects of volunteer programmes to disseminate knowledge of dry stone construction: building micro-bar-rages, restoring Tinos pigeon coops, enhancing fountains and traditional wells, replanting woods, etc. In the last few years, I have noticed that people are more and more interested in these questions but unfortunately there is no training centre in existence, nor are landowners financially motivated"

Yannis Psaltis, Tinos - Greece

"The main problems we meet are linked to the fact that most houses in stone or brick are in a bad state so their restoration is difficult.

The town councils have decided to apply a system of financial assistance which covers 40% of restoration costs and is a vital motivating factor for owners, on

the condition that restoration follows exactly the original plans of the house."

Marios Loizides, Cyprus

"Walls are a major element of the landscape in the Cévennes, the inevitable element which allowed human settlement. As elsewhere, they are no longer considered necessary, and were not maintained after the agricultural slump of the 1950's. At the moment there is no public money for the restoration of walls but this may soon change as awareness is growing that the upkeep of the terraces retains water, contributing to flood limitation. It also helps regulate the flow of springs in summer."

Christian Emery, Cévennes - France

"I should say that in Majorca, as elsewhere, some people are very aware of this theme and others have no idea it exists. In general, however, there is considerable interest in the restoration of stone edifices. There is a high level of demand, even if in the majority of cases the traditional dry stone techniques are not used."

Guillem Palou Mas, Majorca - Spain

"The main work in this area of south west Scotland is the rebuilding and restoration of dry stone boundary walls, work for which owners can receive European subsidies covering about 75% of costs. As there are many dry stone walls in this region, there is considerable interest in dry stone work and experienced members of the DSWA participate in demonstrations and publicity for the profession in local agricultural fairs and the like. The DSWA is a national organisation with regional chapters, one of which is in south west Scotland. It is a major factor in the promotion and quality control of the profession in the United Kingdom."

Jimmy Scott, Scotland - United Kingdom ■

Scotland



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## Raising awareness in Tinos



© Anastasia Psalti

Tinos

### Discovery excursions

About 10 participants, including teachers, civil engineers and architects, took part in each visit to rediscover their own island and its dry-stone heritage through the eyes of a man with a passion. Yannis Psaltis led them to a variety of sites on the island that testify to the value of the dry-stone constructions, demonstrating the upkeep they require and the restoration work that has already been carried out by volunteers.

A typical excursion included two stages: a time of general information on the situation of dry-stone constructions, with documentation provided. This was held in a village café in Sberados. Then the on-site discovery where a dry-stone technician demonstrated how a portion of wall is restored.

The participants showed an interest that far exceeded our expectations, with several of them asking how they

Tinos



© Anastasia Psalti

can become involved in the hands-on aspects of the job.

### Heritage classes

Four excursions of about five hours each have been carried out by four classes from the church high-school in Tinos.

They travelled to the work site of the young volunteers from the APARE that was set up during the summer of 2003 in Sberados (see the 1st Forum newsletter).

The groups were made up of 10 students accompanied by two teachers.

In the first instance, Anastasia Psalti, a civil engineer, led the group in order to present some of the general information concerning dry-stone construction around the world and the actions undertaken at the local level in Tinos.



Training manual

At the second stage, the students were introduced to dry-stone construction techniques.

This part of the event was held with the help of several wallers who built a new section of wall in front of the students, then repaired a damaged section in order to demonstrate their art.

Between the two stages of the visit, they were a break for refreshments when everyone could ask questions.

The visits finished with the distribution of a small souvenir, a photo calendar of Tinos, given by the Saint Stephen cultural association in charge of running the project in Tinos. ■

# A European enchiridion for training dry-stone wallers

**R**ecognizing the experience of the Majorca insular council in this area, the Forum have entrusted the FODESMA with the responsibility of putting together a European reference enchiridion for the professional training of dry-stone wallers.

## A training module

This reference tool has two objectives: the first is to renew interest in the walling profession thanks to a qualifying and recognised training programme, the second is to ensure that know-how is passed on to young professionals.

Only by generating new skills can the present generation guarantee both the preservation of the existing heritage and the quality of new dry-stone constructions.

The enchiridion is based on a training programme of one year. It is intended to be transferable to other European countries, but must of course be adapted to the specific features of each territory and to the characteristics of the different groups of trainees. This should motivate existing training schools to include in their training programmes a course relating to dry-stone construction techniques and provide the model for developing the content of such courses.

The module being proposed aims to be as complete as possible. It includes:

- > The dry-stone walling profession (history and characteristics)
- > The *lithic* material (how to recognise it and use it).
- > Extraction tools and stone shaping tools, soil preparation, stone positioning, etc. (safe handling, etc.)
- > The structure of dry-stone constructions (walls, drainage systems, shelters and sheds, cobbled streets, etc.)

The main interest of the training being offered remains in the construction work itself. Participants put into practice a lot of the techniques they have learnt, from laying foundations to cutting the stones and setting the wall copping.

For each of these themes, the enchiridion includes a teaching section and well as a methodology and an evaluation procedure.

## A list of the training sessions

Compiling the training reference guide required an census of basic training courses for dry-stone construction techniques in partner countries. As well as the wallers' school in Majorca, there are several

interesting training opportunities in the UK and in France, some of which lead to a qualification, some not. As for Cyprus and Greece, we could only regret the lack of available courses, given the obvious need for skilled wallers in view of the wonderful heritage to be preserved and restored.

This reference tool provides a general overview of what is out there, and will be useful to young stone-workers wanting to specialise as well as to job-seekers who are looking for a qualifying training programme with a certain amount of recognition. We also hope that the document will lead to the creation of new training programmes in regions where such options are sadly lacking.

Some of the wallers' training organisations in Europe:

### > *The Walling school of Majorca* *La Escuela de Marges de Mallorca*

Set up by the administrative council of Majorca in 1986 for the benefit of young people looking for work, the Majorca wallers' school aims to train dry-stone experts thanks to a restoration programme for local heritage features. The training combines theory and practical work over a 1 or 2 year period.  
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Tél. + 34 971 173 645  
fodesmaz@conselldemallorca.net  
website : [www.conselldemallorca.net](http://www.conselldemallorca.net)

### > *Ongoing training programmes and diplomas from the Dry-Stone Walling Association of Great Britain*

This organisation carries out a whole range of training activities: sessions for the management and safety of work-sites, professional forums, teacher training and instruction training, preparation courses for qualifying certificates. The DSWA organises qualification exams – from entry level to master craftsman – leading to recognised accreditations at a national level.

DSWA  
Westmorland County Showground,  
Lane Farm, Crooklands, Milnthorpe,  
UK-Cumbria LA7 7NH  
information@dswa.org.uk  
website : [www.dswa.org.uk](http://www.dswa.org.uk)

### > *Professional training sessions with the Lithos association*

The Provençal association Lithos holds training sessions for professionals of the building trade who want to widen their field of skills or specialise in dry-stone techniques.

Lithos - Maison de la pierre sèche  
Place Albert Maurel  
F 84210 Le Beaucet  
Tel./Fax : +33 (0)4 90 69 60 15

*Gordes in Provence, France, at the work-site of the training camp.*



©Philippe Alexandre

# The beginning of the European Dry-Stone Forum

## The CME (Mediterranean Centre for the Environment)

Avignon, France

The CME is the project initiator: an association dedicated to environmental and cultural education, working alongside local participants to set up projects for preserving the Euro-Mediterranean heritage.

## FODESMA Majorca, Spain

A public organisation for professional training under the aegis of the Majorca regional administration. Training activities and heritage management are an integral part of the sustainable economy development plans for the island. Among the tools set up with this objective is the training work camp programme, based on the islands rural dry-stone heritage.

## Solway Heritage Dumfries, UK

This is an NGO whose purpose is to develop the environmental and cultural heritage of the Dumfries & Galloway region. Dry-stone construction is a major feature of the scenery and culture there. Solway Heritage promotes and develops tourist discovery routes, information sessions and restoration work.

## Ecognosia Nicosia, Cyprus

For the past ten years, this centre for research and information on the environment and heritage has been carrying out studies and development programmes for traditional architectural heritage. The centre's objective is to maintain the links between the local population and the environment.

## The Mesogiako Kentro Perivallontos (MKP) Athens, Greece

This NGO helps local enthusiasts to develop protection policies for enhancing the natural and cultural heritage of Greece. Through a variety of European projects, the MKP contributes to the links between these local activists and their counterparts in other European countries.

## The cultural association of Sberados

Tinos, Greece

This local initiative focuses on the development of its cultural heritage by carrying out annual restoration work of the buildings of the village with the help of a team of volunteers, making use of everyone's specific talents.

## Carrefour européen de la pierre sèche

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# agenda

## The Tinos Seminar 15 - 18 April 2004

The partners of the European Dry-Stone Forum met on Tinos, an island of the Cyclades. The programme included: results evaluation, clarification of future perspectives and activities for the different projects, based around 3 focal points:

- > *A general review:* the wallers' directory and the comparative techniques enchriridion, the experimental protocol for wall performance standards.
- > *Professionals:* training (basic and professional), professional charter, Europe-wide association.
- > *Tools for raising public awareness and participation:* heritage classes, educational excursions, exhibitions, volunteer work-sites, the local authorities' strategy plan.

This seminar was organised by the Cultural Association of Sberados (Tinos) and the Mesogiako Kentro Perivallontos (Athens). Contacts:

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## Special note

### The CME has moved!

Still in the Vacluse, but in L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, a charming little town with a large number of canals.

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## « Wallers without borders »: an idea to be pursued...

The winter of 2003 was rough on Tinos, in the Cyclades, and many dry-stone walls that had not been maintained did not hold up to the weather conditions. Jean-Michel André and two of his counterparts on the island of Tinos, Minas Maravelias and Vassilis Gerodimos have come up with the idea of « Wallers without borders »: an international network of wallers who could step in to help preserve threatened dry-stone heritage in case of emergency.

## « At the Crossroads of European Dry-Stone Walling »

This exhibition was opened during the Tinos seminar, presenting the rural dry-stone heritage that is common to most of Europe. Photos from the 5 partner regions and a simple educational commentary provided information on:

- > Characteristics and diversity of dry-stone heritage.
- > Craftsmen and expertise of dry-stone construction.
- > Dry-stone today and how to preserve it.

To complement this exhibition, a young Irish architect has documented his work on an abandoned village in the Zagori region of Greece (Mavronoros), with photos and commentaries on a style of architecture based on stone work that is waiting to be restored...

**An itinerant exhibition has been shown in partner countries from April to June 2004 according to the provisional programme:**

- > Tinos: 16/18 April
- > Athens: 21 April - 17 May
- > Majorca: 25 May - 25 June
- > Avignon: July

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## Scotland : public support for dry-stone constructions.

In Scotland, public authorities have acknowledged the importance of dry-stone constructions as a major feature of the territory and the scenery. Financial incentives encourage farmers and land owners. In this way, dry-stone walls can be subsidised up to 50% (25% from the State and 25% from the European Community), with GBP 12 been provided for every m<sup>2</sup> of restored wall, with a further GBP 4 for every m<sup>2</sup> of construction restored with reused stones.

An example to be followed and adapted ?