CALLY BOUNDARIES

Evaluation Report of a Project Led By Gatehouse Development Initiative
Cally Boundaries project was funded by:

[Logos of Heritage Lottery Fund, EU, LEADER, and Scottish Government]

Cally Boundaries project was supported by:

[Logos of Dumfries & Galloway Council, Forestry Commission Scotland, and APARE]

Cally Boundaries project received management advice from:

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1 BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Cally Boundaries was a community led project which successfully restored dry stone dykes by involving a wide range of people in the physical improvement of the historical setting of Gatehouse of Fleet. The main aim of the project was to repair dry stone dykes within the designed landscape, encourage volunteers to develop dry stone dyking skills and raise awareness of our cultural landscape.

Activities were developed to strengthen the links between the people of Gatehouse of Fleet and the surrounding countryside to enhance the experience of people visiting the designed landscape and to give pride to the local community by improving the setting of their town.

Cally is the country house located immediately to the south of Gatehouse of Fleet. The Cally Designed Landscape Management Plan identified dry stone dykes as being an important element of the policies of the country house.

Dry stone dykes are a common element of the traditional farming landscape surrounding Gatehouse of Fleet. The underlying geology of the area is reflected in the most striking fashion with the different qualities of local stones determining the variety of field enclosure. The variety of dry stone dyke construction and function, stone colour and texture are essential features in the countryside surrounding Gatehouse of Fleet.

The Fleet Valley National Scenic Area (NSA) Management Strategy confirmed that the dry stone dykes are an important element of the landscape which should be conserved to maintain the visual quality of the area.

A local man, Colonel Rainsford-Hannay, was an early champion of the need to maintain dykes and encourage the craft of dry stone dyking. He instigated a regionally based committee to promote the craft and it eventually led to the formation of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain. Past dyking competitions in Gatehouse of Fleet mean the community has a good understanding of the cultural value of dry stone dykes.

The Cally Designed Landscape Management Plan recommended that a condition survey of the remaining boundaries should be carried out to inform future restoration work. National Scenic Area Volunteers surveyed and assessed 17 km of dyke and an action plan identified priorities for restoration. Dry stone dykes selected for repair were those in poor condition and were of historical interest and / or made a significant visual contribution to the landscape.

The project was supported by members of the Cally Designed Landscape Group including Forestry Commission Scotland, the manager of Cally Woods.
Using the information collected by volunteers a project proposal was developed by Gatehouse Development Initiative with the assistance of Solway Heritage. Successful funding applications were made by Gatehouse Development Initiative to Heritage Lottery Fund ‘Your Heritage’ (£33,000) and Leader (£33,500). The Gatehouse Development Initiative and Forestry Commission Scotland agreed to provide in-kind support.

2 PROJECT SUMMARY

The Cally Boundaries project took place between November 2008 and December 2010 and had the following aims:

- Repair dry stone dykes within the designed landscape.
- Encourage volunteers to develop dry stone skills.
- Raise awareness of the importance of dry stone dykes in the designed landscape.

Solway Heritage worked closely with Forestry Commission Scotland and Gatehouse Development Initiative throughout the project to help ensure that all the elements of the project came together and to provide advice in the areas of expertise, where the Initiative felt that professional input was required.

Volunteers from a number of different groups were involved in the activities related to the restoration of the dry stone dykes. The groups included people from a variety of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. These included pupils from Kirkcudbright Academy and Gatehouse of Fleet Primary School, the National Scenic Area Volunteers, a group of volunteers from France and a group of Solicitors from Glasgow. The project included the involvement of three groups suffering from social exclusion. They are the Walking Free group from Borgue, who are undergoing drug rehabilitation, as well as unemployed people from the Galloway Forest Volunteer Project and the Community Service Volunteers.

With co-ordination and leadership from the National Scenic Area Ranger the volunteers cleared vegetation from dykes to reveal the stonework and enable repair work to be undertaken. Along the B727 the volunteers cleared back undergrowth to six feet to prevent future growth from threatening the restored dykes. A pole saw was used to trim overhanging branches. The volunteers were also assisted by the NSA Ranger who is a licensed chain saw and strimmer operator.

Opportunities to learn dry stone dyking skills were provided through a series of one day workshops. Volunteers rebuilt dykes under the supervision of qualified trainers to learn new skills. Kirkcudbright Academy Rural Skills Group also undertook a series of training days.

Dry stone dykes provide the ultimate example of sustainable construction reusing stone which can be used again and again. All dykes constructed during the project will be maintained in the future by Forestry Commission Scotland.
Gatehouse of Fleet Primary School visited Cally to discover the designed landscape and the reason for hahas and sunk dykes. They made sketches in the field and returned to the classroom to develop their sketches into drawings, prints and paintings exhibited in the School.

Prints by Gatehouse Primary School pupils

Historical research was undertaken to reveal information about the people who originally built the dykes. The research identified the names of workers, the cost of the work and when it was carried out. Descriptions of the work helped inform authentic repair and was particularly useful in confirming the sunk dyke had a turf cope.

Throughout the project a photographic diary was made of the progress and the information was used in displays. The Gatehouse of Fleet website was used to provide information about the project and promote training opportunities; www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk.

Cally Boundaries project has featured in guided walks, presentations, talks and publications.

The project has achieved the following outputs:

- 2,700 metres of dry stone dyke have been conserved.
- 1,100 square metres of dry stone dyke have been rebuilt.
- 132 people have volunteered to take part in the physical work to conserve the dykes.
- 49 people have been directly involved in learning dry stone dyking skills.
- 50 primary school children involved in learning about their surroundings.
- Three local dry stone dyking businesses have been employed as well as the local monumental mason and graphic designer.
The project outcomes are less easy to measure, however feedback suggests that:

- Participants are more aware of their built heritage and its importance in the countryside.
- Volunteers from varying backgrounds have benefited from working together to achieve improvements to their built heritage.
- Volunteers have benefited from activities which involve physical exercise in the outdoors.
- Participants are more aware of how they can influence and become involved in land management decisions.
- Visitors to Cally Woods and Cally Palace Hotel are more aware of the cultural history of the area.
- Residents and visitors are aware of the visual improvements that have occurred in the setting of the town.
- Land managers are more aware of the importance of protecting features of historic interest and how, by working with others, conservation can be achieved.
- The project has given volunteers the confidence to develop and complete new schemes.
- The project has contributed to civic pride and has been nominated for awards.
- Organisation of volunteers ensured that their contribution exceeded expectations.
- Professional management advice ensured that the many players in the project were all focused on achieving the agreed outputs.
3 ACTIVITIES

The focus of the project activities was to involve people from a wide variety of backgrounds in the conservation of dykes in the designed landscape to strengthen links with the surrounding countryside, enhance the approach to the town and encourage informed access to the designed landscape. The Gatehouse Development Initiative identified a range of activities to highlight the historical significance of the Cally Boundaries, demonstrating the links between the people of Gatehouse and their surroundings. The activities took place between November 2008 and December 2010 and were managed by Gatehouse Development Initiative with support from Solway Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland. The volunteers were coordinated by the National Scenic Area Ranger.

3.1 Demonstration Dyke

Dry stone dykes have stood the test of time and successfully provide an effective and long lived boundary which is in harmony with the landscape. They provide the ultimate example of sustainable construction by using stone, a local material which can be used repeatedly and is often a waste product from field clearances.

To mark the start of the project a short section of tumbled down dry stone dyke was identified for restoration. A 20 m length of dyke adjacent to a popular footpath was identified as being a remnant of an enclosure for cattle parks which are a physical reminder of a turning point in Scottish history and a part of our cultural heritage.

Photo 1 The tumbled down dyke next to the popular woodland walk

The fact that this dry stone dyke is now in the middle of mature woodland provides an opportunity to raise awareness of elements of the designed landscape which have now been lost.
The dyke was cleared by members of the Galloway Forest Volunteer Project and the National Scenic Area Volunteers.

Vegetation was removed from on and beside the dyke and fallen stone was unearthed and set aside for reuse. It was noted that the majority of the stone had not been quarried and was probably arising from field clearance, suggesting that this was one of the earlier enclosures in the designed landscape. Professional dykers Kevin Butters and Dave Cochrane rebuilt the dyke reusing the existing stone and although some people commented on the loss of the moss covered stones the new dyke was noticed by people who used Cally Woods.
3.2 Interpretation Panel

The reconstruction of a sample length of dyke has been used as a tool to explain the role of Cally from the enclosure of land in the early 1700s to the restoration works undertaken as part of the Cally Boundaries Project. Using text and an image of remnants of Cally parkland, the panels explain the aspirations of the landowners and the existing forestry planted in the 1930s by Forestry Commission Scotland.

A small interpretation board was erected by the National Scenic Area Volunteers adjacent to the new dyke. The two sided A4 panel was designed to comply with the Forestry Commission graphic style and to promote the Cally Boundaries Project.

Managed by Solway Heritage the text was agreed with Gatehouse Development Initiative. The graphic design was undertaken by Dumfries and Galloway Council Graphics Team and the panel was manufactured by Signpost.

Panel erected at the demonstration dyke.

Some of the learning activities undertaken cost less than estimated and this allowed the project to develop further interpretation and information. These included the design and manufacture of panels in the Mill on the Fleet Visitor Centre and a leaflet providing a self guided tour of the designed landscape, featuring dry stone dykes which have been restored.
3.3 Phase 1 Rebuilding Policy Dykes

Derelict or poorly rebuilt dry stone dykes have an adverse impact on landscape quality. A section of the dyke along side the B727 was selected for restoration because of its poor condition and the recognition that restored dykes would have a positive effect on the approach to Gatehouse of Fleet.

The initial plan was to clear vegetation from fallen down sections of the roadside dyke so that it could be repaired. Comments from people in the town showed that the work was greatly appreciated and this encouraged the volunteers to clear vegetation from the whole length of the dyke exposing additional sections of dyke which required attention and which were undertaken in Phase 2.

Clearance of the dykes uncovered evidence of the cause of much of the damage. The remains of various car parts established that much of the damage had occurred due to past traffic accidents. The project has encouraged the Forestry Commission Scotland to take action after accidents to ensure that dykes are repaired. Traffic management measures have also been implemented, which it is hoped will reduce the number of accidents on this stretch of the B727.

The restoration work was undertaken by two teams of professional dry stone dykers; Alex Sharpe and his team of up to four men and Kevin Butters and his team of up to two men.

The lower sections of dyke were used for the training sessions so that they were highly visible to passers by and assisted in raising awareness of the project.
Dyke before work started

After partial clearance

Completed restoration
3.4 Restore Haha

The haha located on the boundary between the Cally Palace Hotel and forestry was assessed as being an important historical feature. Years of neglect had allowed the undergrowth to hide the haha in some places and, although the view it was intended to reveal, is now interrupted by forestry planting and the A75 trunk road, its restoration helps to interpret the designed landscape.

Volunteers clearing undergrowth

Completed haha

The undergrowth was cleared from the haha by volunteers with assistance from grounds maintenance staff from the Hotel who removed some of the larger trees and rhododendron from the retaining dyke.
The dry stone retaining dyke was in generally good condition except where tree roots had caused bulging and dislodged stone.

The remains of a low metal mesh fence were found on top of the haha dyke. It was in poor condition and as it was unlikely to be an original element of the design, consent was given to remove the fencing.

Professional dykers repaired the dyke using stone fallen from the dyke.

Forestry Commission Scotland assisted by removing the soil which had built up in the ditch over many years and re-graded the slope.

The Cally Palace Hotel assisted by clearing some vegetation from their grounds to make the haha more visible. An informal path adjacent to the haha is promoted to residents of the Hotel and guided walks are sometimes offered which feature work completed in the Cally Boundaries project.

Site visit by Cally Designed Landscape Group
3.5 **Dry Stone Training Days and Supervised Volunteer Days**

Training in dry stone dyking techniques was offered as one day taster sessions for no cost. Training was offered to all who participated in the clearance work as well as being advertised through various media for interested individuals who lived locally.

Training was initially given by Alex Sharpe, a professional dyker certified as a trainer by the Dry Stone Walling Association. Later, when Alex was unable to deliver training due to illness, the training was delivered by Kevin Butters.
A total of 14 training days were run with 49 volunteers attending. Trainees who felt that they would benefit from additional training were encouraged to attend additional training days or work alongside the professional dykers on supervised volunteer days. However while several people attended more than one training day there was less demand for supervised volunteer days. Perhaps this was because volunteers, having participated in training, felt it was more valuable to them and the project to focus their volunteering on clearing work, allowing the professionals to restore a greater amount of dyke.

Pupils in the Rural Skills Group from Kirkcudbright Academy attended three training days run by Dave Cochrane.
3.6 Dry Stone Volunteer Camp

The deer dyke adjacent to the well used pedestrian and cycle track between Cally and Sandgreen also offered potential for restoration by conservation volunteers. It was particularly valuable for the training undertaken during a two week volunteer camp for participants from France. The National Scenic Area Volunteers prepared the area by clearing the dykes of vegetation prior to their arrival.

Repairing the dyke
The eight volunteers were recruited by APARE (Association pour la Participation et l’Action Régionale) an organisation which promotes volunteer work-camps which aim to protect and help develop the natural and cultural resources of a region. They encourage volunteers to work on a group project to benefit the environment and heritage.

Over a period of two weeks the volunteers lived together in Gatehouse of Fleet and participated in a work programme that enabled them to learn basic conservation skills. They spent 10 days learning how to repair dry stone dykes under the expert supervision of master craftsman dyker, Jimmy Scott. They worked tirelessly and enthusiastically despite the wet weather and restored a far larger area of dyke than anticipated.

With the help of local coordinator, Cecilia Franklin, they made contact with the local community and explored their new surroundings. In contrast to the poor weather the European Volunteers received a warm welcome from the local community who invited them to participate in local events including folk nights at the Masonic Arms and lessons in bowling at Gatehouse Bowling Club. The Volunteers also enjoyed additional activities which allowed them to discover the natural, built and cultural heritage of Dumfries and Galloway. The outings included visits to the surrounding countryside, wildlife experiences such as viewing the osprey nest at Threave, a visit to the Mull of Galloway Lighthouse and Bladnoch Distillery as well as historic visits to Cairn Holy and St Ninians cave.

The Whithorn Trust, Historic Scotland and Logan Gardens all provided free access for the group of learners, adding greatly to their experience of the region.

A completed section of dyke
3.7 School Field Trip

Visit by Gatehouse of Fleet Primary School

The local primary school P2/3/4 and P6/7 pupils undertook an environmental project ‘looking at our area’. A trip to the Hotel was followed by visits to view the surrounding landscape and understand the importance of dry stone dykes.

Artist, Hugh Bryden continued the activity with three days classroom work producing drawings, prints and ‘Victorian vignettes’ and ‘concertina views’. The work was displayed in the class rooms and School corridor.

Art work produced as part of the project.

Cally Palace Hotel invited the children to view the impressive drawing room and provided drinks and snacks.
3.8 Phase 2 Rebuilding Policy Dykes

The deer / policy dykes on the eastern boundary of Cally on the northern side of the A75 were in a very poor state of repair. Where the dyke had failed in the past it was often repaired to a lower height giving it a castellated appearance. These dykes are seen by vehicle users travelling west on the busy trunk road and were assessed as being a priority because they are highly visible and have a big impact on the visual quality of the landscape.
Vegetation was cleared by volunteers and the dyke was repaired and rebuilt to provide a continuous boundary feature.

The second phase included continued clearance and repair work to the dyke alongside the B727 adding to the work completed in Phase 1.
3.9  Restore Sunk Dyke

The sunk dyke to the south of the A75 is an unusual historic feature which helps interpret the designed landscape. The sunk dyke is a 1.6 m high dyke built along the centre line of a ditch which has a burn running down one side for most of its length. From a short distance away the sunk dyke has a similar visual effect as a more traditional haha.

![Sunk dyke in poor condition before restoration.](image)

The sunk dyke, although still stock proof, was damaged by fallen trees in numerous locations. The farmer, Mr Prentice, assisted by removing some of the trees that had fallen across the dyke. Forestry Commission Scotland also provided in kind work by felling some of the larger trees growing in the dyke.

Volunteers cleared vegetation from the dyke and ditch. They also removed small trees and undergrowth from the woodland side of the sunk dyke to open up impressive views of the designed landscape from within Cally Woods.

The absence of copes on the dyke had been noted during the Condition Survey, however it was not clear if they had never been there or had been robbed sometime in the past. Research identified that a similar ‘double sunk dyke’ in Ireland had been topped by turf and archive material at General Register House suggested the same technique had been used in Cally. Volunteers cut turf and placed it on top of the dykes repaired by professional dykers.

The sunk dyke is close to a popular pedestrian / cycle route but, because it was designed to be hidden, is not easily seen. Volunteers cut an informal path through the woodland to improve access to the sunk dyke.
Sunk dyke completed with turf cope.

View across sunk dyke to parkland beyond.

The historic value of the sunk dyke is increased because of the adjacent grazed farmland. The work completed successfully draws attention to the remaining parkland views as intended by the landscape design.
3.10 Raising Awareness and Marking on Site

This has been a highly visible project which has revealed dykes which were tumbling down and covered in ivy. Activities by volunteers, trainees and professional dykers often occurred in very public places adjacent to roads, cycleways and footpaths.

Regular progress has been reported on in the Gatehouse of Fleet website which was also used to provide information about dry stone dyking training opportunities; www.gatehouse-of-fleet.co.uk. Monthly newsletters detailing volunteering opportunities and providing feedback on volunteering were produced by the NSA Ranger and these were also loaded onto the Gatehouse website.

Reports have appeared in the local press, newsletters and magazines as well as Dry Stone Walling Association publications.

An initial proposal was to carve the names of those who had been involved in the project on a stone. However, so many people were involved that it was decided that it would be too costly to include everyone by name.

Fortunately historical research undertaken by volunteers had discovered the names of the original dykers as well as the date the dykes were constructed.

It was decided that three stone plaques should be built into the repaired sections of dyke which commemorate the community project as well as provide the names of the original dykers and the dates the dyke was built and restored.

![Stone panel marking dyke built in 1817](image)
The plaques were made from local granite matching the stone used for the copes. They were engraved by a local monumental mason and installed by the professional dry stone dykers.

Throughout the project a photographic diary was made of the progress and the information was used in displays and presentations to a local and international audience.

The profile of the project has been raised by being entered for awards. It was selected to feature in the Leader Dumfries and Galloway Good Practice Guide as a project which contributed towards helping to establish or strengthen links between communities and the land around them. The project in association with other Cally Designed Landscape Projects was also nominated by Galloway Preservation Society for a Scottish Civic Trust My Place Award 2011. The project has received a commendation in recognition of it being an exceptional example of a true community project.
4 OTHER OUTPUTS

Although not part of this project, the Sulwath Connections Landscape Project added to the impact of the project. Sulwath Connections was supported by Heritage Lottery Fund and led by Dumfries and Galloway Council in partnership with many other organisations and groups. The project ‘Realising the potential of the NSAs’ aimed to conserve the cultural history of the Fleet Valley area and included restoration of field boundaries. The project identified dry stone dykes on Enrick Farm which were separate from but adjacent to work implemented by Cally Boundaries and so increased the impact of both projects.

![Enrick top field restored dyke](image1)

![Enrick south of A75 restored dykes](image2)
5 WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

The project has illustrated what can be achieved by a combination of volunteer action and partnership working. The aims of the project have been achieved within the overall budget available. Some of the activities, such as the volunteer camp, cost less than anticipated but still achieved more than was expected. Some flexibility with allocated costs meant that under spend on some activities allowed other activities to be increased.

The Cally Boundaries Project encouraged local people to explore the outdoors and take an active role in enhancing their surroundings. The project provided an opportunity for the community to have a direct involvement in shaping the future management of the local environment and further develop a sense of community ownership of the Cally Woods. The project was fortunate in having the assistance of Ian Brown, the National Scenic Area Ranger, to programme volunteering activities and provide appropriate tools. He also coordinated, collated and analysed volunteer timesheets. Solway Heritage provided expert advice throughout the project and, in particular, advised on the most appropriate areas for restoration, organised the tenders for the appointment of the dykers and ensured that the professional work was carried out to required standards. The support provided was much appreciated by the Gatehouse Development Initiative.

Gatehouse Development Initiative and Cally Designed Landscape Group will continue to develop projects which protect and enhance our heritage. Work has already been undertaken to consolidate the ruins of Lady Ann’s Charity School for Girls located in Cally Woods. A new project to explore the history and natural heritage value of water courses within the designed landscape and the wider Lower Fleet Valley is being developed in partnership with Solway Heritage and Galloway Fisheries Trust and experience gained in the Cally Boundaries project will be used by Gatehouse in the upcoming Day of the Region events.