

# Britain & Ireland's Walling Treasures: Redrawing patterns

*"That which we call a rose, By any other name would smell as sweet."* Romeo and Juliet (Act II, scene ii).

Periodically I remind everyone that this series is an ongoing project with an associated website [www.wallingwonderland.info](http://www.wallingwonderland.info) and presentation "Inscriptions on the Landscape" most recently aired in November for the Preston Natural History and Birdwatching Society, and with two North Welsh Bookings for 2013. Have projector, can travel, dates available!

This being an ongoing project I occasionally unearth more information and very (very, very) rarely get sent information (sadly I never, ever, receive nominations these days). Following the "patterns" edition (which you can of course find on wallingwonderland) back in *Waller and Dyker Spring 2011*



Not a Butt and Hudd, Murrayton, Dumfries and Galloway

Richard Tufnell was kind enough to provide more information on the 'Butt and Hudd' style of single walling which I am told I got very wrong. My interpretation was based on a wall I had been taken to when researching the re-write of BTCV's "Dry Stone Walling", and on F.Rainsford-Hannay's scant text when describing the method as "*short pieces of single dyke of the bigger stones are built, with stretches of double dyke between them. The effect is to tighten up the work and to divide it into panels.*" ("Dry Stone Walling". 3<sup>rd</sup> reprint. South West Scotland Branch of the DSWA. p50). On reflection my example does not 'tighten up the work', but beyond that seemed to fit the criteria. However Richard points out that according to his research the single panel I showed is too big to be 'butt and hudd', which is a specific pattern, with very uniform spacing, and with the stone spread about in a much more careful and selected way than was normal practice - "*in a way that simply relying on available stone would not reproduce*".



Butt and Hudd, photos courtesy Richard Tufnell.

Richard suggests that one reason for their development “*was that by spacing out the boulders - the hudds, - in a regular manner, the benefits of the more durable boulders was distributed throughout the length of the wall. In addition, if a portion of the wall was damaged, it would tend not extend further than the nearest cluster of boulders.*”

These hudds were commonly built 2-4m apart, and Richard adds that “*one hudd stone was sufficient, but two or three were considered better. The double was built up to the level of the top of the hudd, and then a boulder – butt - was laid, half on the hudd, half on the double. Thus the hudds were connected with the double on both sides*”. Once these were in position, the double was continued to around half the overall height, covers then set and the wall continued up as a single wall. “*Subsequent stones (named gulls) were so dressed as to sit firmly and level without pinning. The tops were a minimum of 10” (25cms), and also dressed to give the tightest possible fit. Such a wall cost about a third more than a standard version.*”

Apparently another name for hudd is “sneck”. I find this interesting as “sneck”, as far as walling is concerned, is probably better known as a masonry term for a small (usually square) stone filling a gap between two stones of differing size/height (levelling with the lower of the two). My Shorter Oxford English Dictionary definition of sneck however does precede its masonry definition with another one – from Scotland and the North - “*the latch of a door or gate...*” and from this the verb form “*to close or fasten with a sneck*”. The fastening aspect is thus possibly relevant to its use vis hudd. Nick Aitken suggested “*Hudd' is a Scots word which can be translated in some instances as 'hold'*”. This seems relevant in this instance with hudd, hold, fasten and sneck amounting to much the same thing, with the hudd securing/holding the wall, whilst at the same time the coverstone (butt) sits on the lower hudd stone and the adjoining double, fastening/holding them.

In summary the term 'butt and hudd' is used as a single term which describes alternate double and single (or Galloway pattern) walling in a regular pattern. In its purist form it is a series of short, regular, panels forming a simple pattern.

In the Spring 2011 article I mentioned that patterns could be highly localised centring on a village, even a farm, or cover whole counties, and that they were often completely overlooked, not even recognised, identifying them being a huge problem. Deciding what to call them (essential for ease of reference) is no easier. At exactly what point more random panels become close enough, or regular enough, to be considered strictly butt and hudd is difficult to say. What should we call Rainsford-Hannay's “*short pieces of single dyke ... with stretches of double dyke between them*”. Subtle differences from one location (or even wall) to another can lead, eventually, to markedly different patterns or styles of building. As Nick pointed out to me, “*variation in available stone and dykers' style would affect how ... walls would be built*”. I think it likely that many local patterns of walling in general would have developed as variations of more formal patterns, and lack a definition in their own right. Whilst describing these panels as butt and hudd is inaccurate, it is the nearest formal pattern of reference. If we are to call them anything (personally I think if they are worth recognising they ought to have a name), might we not get away with describing the panels as a ‘variation of butt and hudd’, maybe ‘extended butt and hudd’ (glossing over the hudd - holding aspect), although I accept that my original example would be stretching the looseness of this definition to the extreme.

‘*Goodnight, Good night! Parting is....*’ At this point I had intended to continue with other aspects of the patterns mentioned in the Spring 2011 article. Space dictates that this is not to be here. This series began on an ad hoc basis in the North Wales Branch published magazine “*Stonechat*”, to whence it is about to return. The rest of this article on Purbeck’s inclined stonework and more vertical stonework elsewhere, can be found in edition number 28, available from the Branch – contact administrator@dswales.org.uk for information. Future “*Walling Treasures*” articles will be exclusive to “*Stonechat*”. “*Stonechat*” No.28 will appear online ([www.dswales.org.uk](http://www.dswales.org.uk) for .pdf back-copies) in about a year, the specific article should be on [wallingwonderland.info](http://wallingwonderland.info) somewhat sooner.

Thanks to Richard and Nick for their input.