



*Warmth from  
the edge of the world*

INIS MEÁIN KNITTING CO. — Aran Islands, Galway Bay, Ireland.



## CLAÍOCHAÍ (STONE FENCES)

In Irish Mythology the great stone forts of Aran were built by the *Fir Boilg*, one of the first invading tribes that occupied Ireland and the Aran Islands about 2500 years ago.

Since then the islanders have been building the *Clai* (pron. klye) or stone fences to form an intricate labyrinth which the writer Tim Robinson estimates would stretch to 1,500 miles if they were all laid down in a straight line. Stone fences in all shapes and patterns depending on the quality of stone which they have been able to meticulously quarry by hand from the natural limestone paving that permeates the whole Aran landscape.

This craft of fence or dry stone wall building has inspired the many artists who visited the islands down through the years including Seán Keating, Harry Clarke and more recently and expressly Seán Scully. — In our AW 2014 collection we have made this craft the inspiration for our knitting. We have designed a unique new pattern specially celebrating the

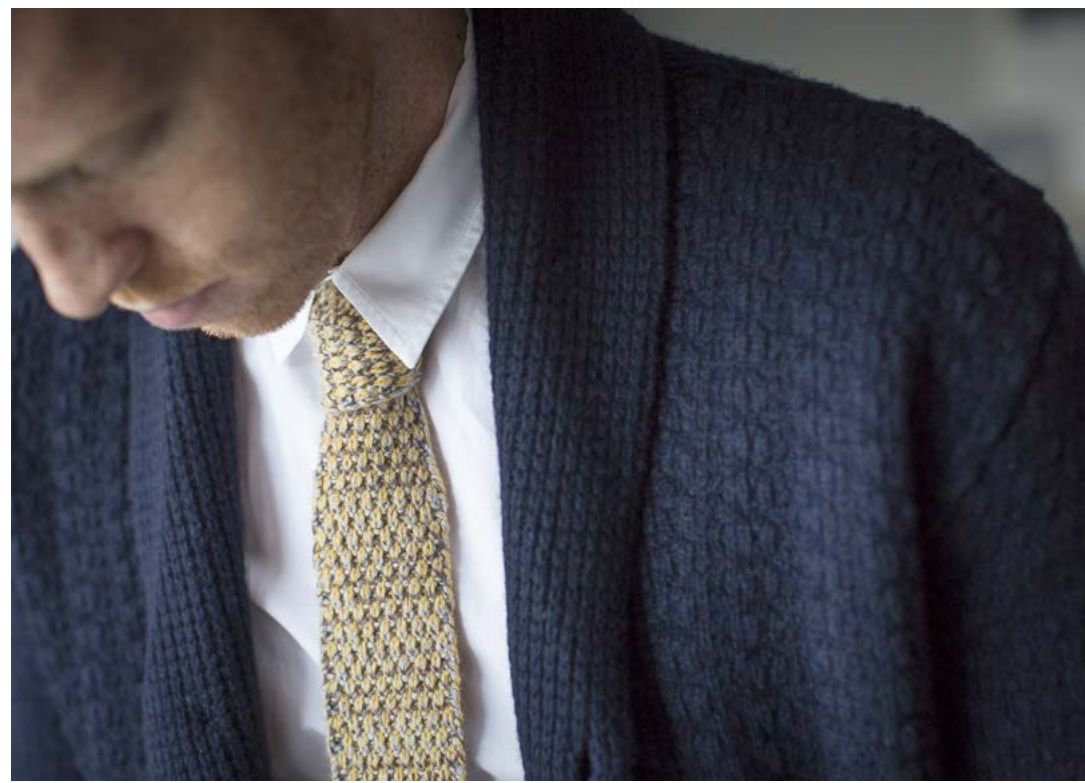
craft of stone fence building. And we have revived some interesting and somewhat forgotten patterns that were island favourites and patterns that provided stability and strength to the work-wear sweaters that were worn everyday by islanders such as: The *Beairtíní*/ Little Bundles, The Floating Moss, The Blackberry and The Sand stitch.













## ANATOMY OF THE STONE FENCE

There are several names in Irish (Gaelic) for these fences depending on their quality. The great Forts are built in the *Claí dúbailte* (Double fence) style, approximately 2m wide. The small fields and gardens are surrounded with regular, common *Claíochaí* (klyexi, plural).

A very neat wall is called a *Sconnsa*.

A *Claí* made by positioning lots of small stones at bottom of the fence between two great slabs is called a *Claí Fidirín* (klye fideen). A *Leachta* (Liaxta) is a big mound of stone which is often an elaborate marker on land for fishermen at sea.

A *Giall* (Jaw) is a big pillar. Usually two of these jaws make a gap in which small stones are placed delicately for knocking down and rebuilding when animals are moved from field to field.

*GO MAIRE TÚ IS GO GCAITHE TÚ É*  
**MAY YOU LIVE LONG TO WEAR IT**

Inis Meáin Knitting Company Ltd.,  
Aran Islands, Galway Bay, Ireland

T +353 99 73009

E [inis@inismeain.com](mailto:inis@inismeain.com)

[www.inismeain.ie](http://www.inismeain.ie)

