

DSWA Dorset News

June 2022



I hope you all enjoyed the Jubilee holiday. There were lots of exciting and creative events around the county. This patriotic pud was made by Sally who won the Langton Herring Jubilee pudding competition with her hazelnut and raspberry meringue, which is one of her specialities. She says, 'I tried to get the right relative sizes of the blue triangles to create an accurate Union Jack.'

'And on Thursday there was a splendid BBQ on the green followed by a procession down to the beacon with about 20 illuminated tissue paper model fish (Martin's idea!).'



Please send your Jubilee photos for inclusion in July's newsletter. I have a few alcohol-free pictures of my own!

Royal Garden Party, 25 May



And here's Sally as you rarely see her – dressed in her best at a Buckingham Palace Garden Party. This invitation, extended two years ago but postponed during the Covid years, was to mark Sally's contribution to dry stone walling. Looks like the afternoon tea was pretty decent. Two platefulls Sally? Wonder if there's gin in that orange juice.



Whoops! Someone forgot the marmalade sandwiches

Sally says: 'I was lucky enough to be nominated by HQ for an invitation to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party. I asked Martin along as my plus one as a thank you for all the support he has given me in my walling exploits. This varies from being dragged off to members' weekends and AGMs all over the country, heaving stones around and transporting them in the back of his car, holding copes in place for me and last but certainly not least he will usually prepare dinner while I relax in a hot bath after a day out walling.'



We decided to make a short break of it and had a lovely few days in London. We explored the lower Thames on a hop-on, hop-off ferry visiting the barrage, the O2 cable car and Greenwich. We also went to Chelsea Flower Show the day following the Garden Party.

There were a few wardrobe issues on the way. The dress code includes a hat. I found mine at the back of the cupboard but it had iron-mould marks on it. The remedy – water, white vinegar and sunlight, worked a treat but it shrank very slightly so it would not stay on securely. I had to re-think and change to a sun hat which originally had a yellow ribbon – I had to replace it with a

blue one to match my outfit. As we left the hotel to walk to the event it blew off across the road. Luckily the taxi waiting to turn in saw what had happened and stopped to avoid both it and me as I ran to retrieve it. The day was very enjoyable but it does involve a lot of standing around. The soles of my smart sandals had perished in the 3-4 years they had been in the back of my wardrobe so I had to wear a different pair.



We had a lovely walk around the gardens; there is a very pretty rose garden, a large lake with wild areas surrounding it and a herbaceous border which will be absolutely fabulous in mid-Summer. There were lots of mature trees and it was difficult to believe you were right in the middle of London.

We queued up for tea, it is served on rectangular plates with a depression to hold your cup of tea or glass of squash. The sandwiches are cut to an exact length to fit across the plate and some people stacked

them up Jenga style. There was also a variety of tasty bite-size cakes. The National Anthem played and we went to line-up to see the royals walk down from the Palace across to where they were to have tea. The



Queen was not there but Princess Beatrice, Prince William and Kate and



Prince Edward and Sophie were representing her. It took about an hour for them to walk the 50 or so metres stopping to chat to selected guests. We had a good spot to see them, albeit in the 5th or 6th rank of people but then the two people in front who were sitting down, moved and a couple of women decided it was OK to stand on the chairs! You can't really get stropky at an event like that

but we were a bit annoyed. We did, however, get quite a good view of Prince William and Kate as we left the Palace later on. They had diverted from the direct route back to talk to some people in wheelchairs and they looked very natural and relaxed.

All in all, it was a lovely experience despite a very heavy shower for about half an hour. As we left we saw all the stands for the Jubilee celebrations being built.

Sherborne Castle Country Fair, 29 May



Branch members worked hard to create a great display at this event. Sherborne Stone Ltd (<https://sherbornestone.com>) provided the stone free of charge in order to build the display wall, and also show visitors the three types of stone available from their quarries. According to one participant, visitors were drawn to our display because we weren't selling anything – apart from our courses! Peter has already taken bookings for the July and September courses at Corton Down.

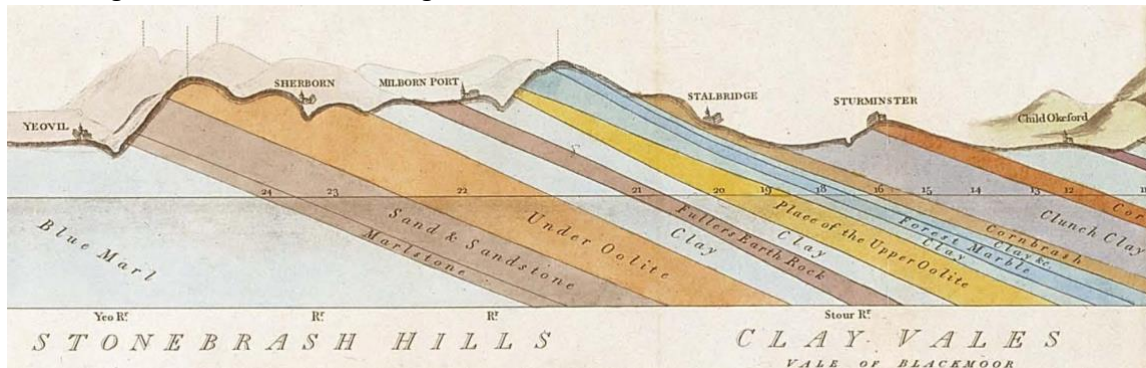


For wallers interested in the geology of the displayed stone, Geoff supplied the following information: 'Forest Marble is quarried from Sherborne Stone's Whithill Quarry, Lillington, for dry stone walling. This is extensively used in north Dorset; Lewcombe, Melbury Osmond, Yetminster, Lillington, Longburton. Also, in south Dorset; Bridport, West Bexington, Langton Herring etc.

Inferior Oolite, Sherborne Limestone Member (Sherborne Building Stone) comes from their Frogden Quarry, Sherborne. This is architectural stone for new builds and conservation work in Inferior Oolite areas such as Sherborne, Beaminster, Broadwindsor, Mapperton, Burton Bradstock etc.

Fuller's Earth Rock. This is a limestone found within the Fuller's Earth Formation (typically clay) of north Dorset. Used for specific limited conservation use. e.g. for Sherborne New Castle and a few villages such as Thornford and Purse Caundle.'

Geological view and section through Dorsetshire and Somersetshire: William 'Strata' Smith 1819



Sherborne Stone

Sherborne Limestone
Member
Inferior Oolite Formation
(Under Oolite)
Aalenian – Bathonian Age
174 – 166.1 Ma
Mid Jurassic

Fuller's Earth Rock

Fuller's Earth Rock Member
Fuller's Earth Formation
Great Oolite Group
Bathonian Age
168.3 – 166.1 Ma
Mid Jurassic

Forest Marble

Forest Marble Formation
Great Oolite Group
Bathonian Age
168.3 – 166.1 Ma
Mid Jurassic



Peter and Phyllis supervise young visitors who try their hand at walling using lightweight 'bricks'. Always a popular draw for children.

Paul, Geoff and Peter relax on the wall after a tough coping session!





Stephen talks dry stone walling with an interested visitor and his dog.

The show took place on Sunday but branch members were working on the Friday and Saturday to take delivery of the stone, build the wall and prepare the site.



This is our new exhibition which was designed for transportation to events like the Sherborne Fair. I curated the panels, which were designed and printed by Swift Signs, Weymouth (<https://swiftsigns.co.uk>). They are very striking and include images of dry stone builds across the county by branch members.



Dorset Branch exhibition

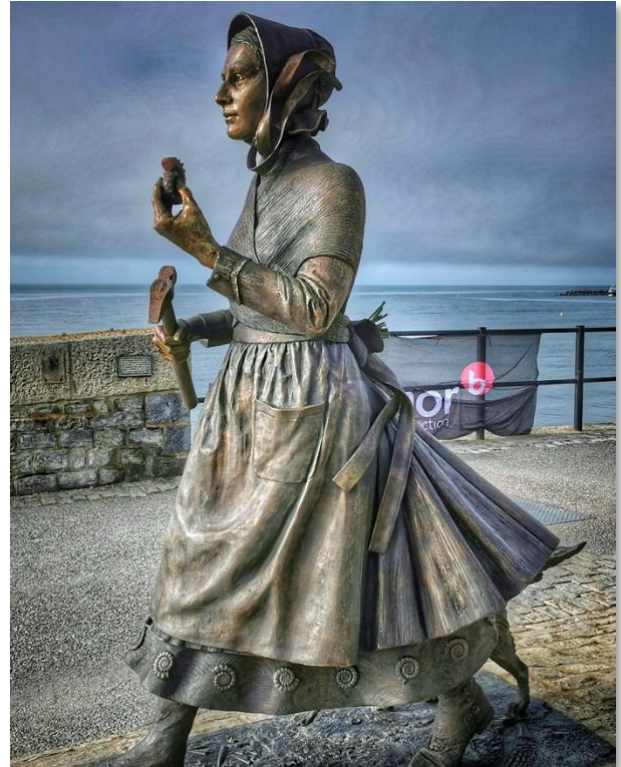
While Dorset wallers were at the Sherborne Fair, I was selling cream teas at a fair in the New Forest. This is an annual event known as the 'Never Again Party' because the person who hosts it said 'Never again' after the first one! That was more than a decade ago. Here I am with my goddaughter Meggie and friend Imelda. Our sales raised a respectable £350 and the whole fair made a profit of £4300, all of which goes to the Salisbury Hospice Charity.



Mary Anning statue unveiled

Saturday 21st May, on what would have been Mary's 223rd Birthday, her statue by sculptor Denise Dutton, is finally unveiled by Professor Alice Roberts, Evie Swire and the children of Lyme Regis, who helped design her.

After five years campaigning, £120,000 crowdfunded, three changes of location and a pandemic - Mary is finally in Lyme Regis.



Dry stone walling at Chelsea Flower Show



While Sally and Martin were in London for the Royal Garden Party, they took the opportunity to visit Chelsea Flower Show where there were a few examples of dry stone walls.

Sally continues: ‘The most interesting feature was the backdrop to the Still Garden. This was a container garden inspired by the Scottish Highlands where the planting was in reclaimed whisky casks and a copper gin-distilling pot. The stone was slate rescued from a disused Perthshire quarry

and built in the same way sea defence walls are built in the Western Isles. It was made to look like a glen between two mountains. The cheek-end was particularly interesting – horizontal stones had been used to tie it together at various heights.

The garden which won the people's choice award was a rewilded landscape. It was a lovely feature but, as Monty Don said in his report, it wasn't really a garden; it was a re-creation of a section of landscape. The water comes through a smoot into a pool which was dammed, supposedly by beavers. It is supposed to depict south west England and also featured a retaining wall built in a sloping stone style but I couldn't find out any more about who had built it.



The RAF Benevolent Fund garden designed by John Everiss, featured a fantastic statue of a young pilot looking up at the sky and holding a cup of tea. It was made of 223 layers of steel.

The garden is surrounded by a curved Purbeck stone wall and I think Carole was consulted about sources of stone. However, I believe it does have a mortar backing. The garden will be re-sited at Biggin Hill after the show.'

Note from Carole: I was contacted by John Everiss in January just as I was preparing my father's account of his RAF experience during the Battle of Britain for the archives at Richmond-upon-Thames where he lived. I mentioned this to John when I emailed him with a list of quarries and what stone they could provide. He wrote back: 'I'm fascinated about the stories of ordinary people in extraordinary times and how they dealt with unimaginable stress and danger. My 23-year-old son is the model for the sculpture and would probably be considered senior aircrew back in 1940! I will be working with Richard Clegg stonework (<https://www.richardclegg.co.uk>) to create a garden for the RAF Benevolent Fund, commemorating not just the Battle of Britain, but also the work the fund does to support veterans and families. Surrounding a sculpture will be a beautiful, spiral drystone wall which is imagined to have been made from bomb damaged portland stone from London's historic buildings.'

Winter's Lane, June



An update on Winter's Lane from Sally.

'We have finished the original section towards the gate. The copes were a bit scarce on the final bits but there were some VERY large round boulders that we managed to roll, barrow and heave into



place on Friday 10 June. Tim found muscles we didn't know he had!

We've decided to give ourselves a bit of a break for the time being as we can't even access the far end at the moment - shoulder high nettles and thistles (see below).

We will start again and go in the other direction at the end of Summer but before the slow-worms



and other reptiles and amphibians will begin hibernating - probably towards end of August.

I will let the mental health forum know but don't hold out much hope that they will ever revive the project.'

Portesham community wall, 11 June

Four branch wallers and eight local volunteers arrive at this lovely shady site to continue the wall begun a couple of weeks ago and to clear another section ready for foundations. Everything looks neat and tidy at the start of the day.



Vaughan mixes the lime mortar to Peter's specifications, and Peter applies it to the stone. The tradition in Portesham is to build the foundations and first four or five courses as dry stone, then to lime mortar a further four or more courses, followed by dry stone to bring the wall to height. Lime mortaring on the existing sections of wall look a bit messy and



unattractive but Peter has us meticulously pointing the stone to create a smart finish in which the stone is delineated and not subsumed by the mortar. All the same, I stay away from mortaring as I don't feel confident to do it properly.



Sally, John and I begin to take down a collapsing section of wall. We'll follow the yellow paint curve when building the wall to allow for tree growth which has already pushed most of the wall over.

Meanwhile, further along the wall, two local volunteers spend a few hours in the sun (below) clearing scrub from another section soon to be dismantled.



The curved foundations take shape although I don't think Sally is too impressed with my efforts. Hers is admittedly better. It was difficult for me to get my head around laying foundations on tarmac, and I kept digging out the earth to create a 'proper' foundation trench.



And (left) here is the mortared section waiting to dry out before the dry stone courses are added.

Came Down, 12 June



The following day Sally and Phyllis return to Came Down to complete a section that's been underway for a while.

Cumbria Corner



An old, moss encrusted wall above Crummock Water. An article in the *Waller & Dyker* (summer 2020) had me thinking about the times we dismantle these walls with no face protection. Moss that is disturbed releases fungal spores which is as bad as, or worse, than inhaling mouldy, dusty hay. So, think about wearing a FFP3 respirator if you need to take down a wall like this one.

Ham Hill

Geoff reports that the Ham Hill meadows are at their best with flowering early purple orchids, yellow rattle, and several pairs of ground-nesting skylarks.

The Friends of Ham Hill (volunteers) have also applied for Rural Skills Hub Experience Day funding for a dry stone walling course on Ham Hill so that more can join in on Mondays (although it's not certain if there is any remaining RSH funding for this year).



Regular wallers at Ham Hill.

Lillington



We were contacted by a landowner in Lillington, near Sherborne, who enquired about restoring this collapsed Forest Marble wall. He met with Geoff and others at the Sherborne Castle Country Fair.

This is a long wall (about 100m), which Geoff reckons might offer opportunities for members practice although he admits 'there may not be much Branch interest in north Dorset.'

If you are interested, please contact me in the first instance and I will pass your email to Geoff.

Crack Lane, June



While Peter and I crack on with our wall at Crack Lane (yes, terrible pun, I know), we asked Trev Haysom if he would mind organising clearance of the section we have allocated for branch members. This abuts a totally wrecked wooden stile which may or may not be replaced by the council. He told us that he had identified the perfect 'post' against which we could build a cheek end. When we arrived at the site last Friday we saw this amazing 'neolithic' standing stone.

Portesham community wall, 18 June



Peter sets up the strings as we all arrive to continue working on this wall.



The lady in the house on the left of the photo keeps us supplied with tea, coffee, juice, water, chocolate brownies and other welcome treats. The community is very friendly and pleased with the progress of the wall.



Towards the end of the day, we manage to cope a section of wall while Sally and I, working on the curve, come up to the height of the first mortared course. We can go no further because Vaughan (he with the cement mixer) is on holiday.

And this is how we leave the wall at the end of the day. There is an obvious demarcation between the 'old' wall and the sections we have rebuilt. Time and weather will blend these sections together.



That's the news for June and probably as much as you want to read when there's so much else to do during this lovely weather. As ever, I welcome news and images from all members but until next month, enjoy the summer and your walling.

Carole Reeves