

# DSWA Dorset News

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January 2023

**Happy New Year!**



Mud, mud, treacherous mud  
Nothing quite like it for boiling the blood  
Follow me, follow  
Down to Crack Hollow  
And there let us wallow in sodding wet mud!





Here we are at Crack Lane on Saturday 7 January. We'd asked Trev Haysom to dig out a couple of trees, move some stone, and generally have a tidy up. But as Peter commented, 'Put a bloke in a digger and he doesn't know when to stop.' And so we venture into a wet, sticky splurge of puddly mud. I fall face first into it as I step over the stile and lose control of my bucket.



Dave has the best job – rubble-topping the section of wall next to the moss-covered 'Honey Monster'. Trev's digger has stayed clear of this area and the mud is less churned up.

Despite the weather, we almost get to the top of the wall before dusk falls and we call it a day. Dave and I are the only wallers due out the next day but we agree to postpone the session until Friday 13<sup>th</sup> – ominous!





## Crack Lane, 13 January



Dave and I have a very productive and enjoyable day with no rain! Dave is rubble topping like crazy while I'm trying to stay a course ahead in coming up to height. Fortunately, Trev and Henry manage to get a 4WD across the boggy field and deliver a truck load of thinnish stone. Dave uses the lunky as a shelter for his tools and spare boots. It is definitely Wellington boot weather at Crack Lane.

## Crack Lane, 19 January



A very frosty day and the stones are iced together and it's also difficult to prise them off the ground. Gradually, the temperature rises and the sun emerges – unfortunately not in our sheltered site.

Peter and I strip down the next section of wall and prepare a foundation trench.

Below, by the end of the day Merrie comes up to height while Peter continues to throw stones out of his trench.





## Winters Lane

January at this AONB site remains sunny and frost free, albeit with a chill in the air.

Regulars, Sally, Tim and Mary work on the final section of this wall. Tim finds quick access to the site by limboing under the string while Mary (below) ties into a curve.







Tim places a through stone and by the end of the day, the low winter sun casts its golden glow over what has been achieved by three wallers over a couple of days.

It makes a big difference to all of us when the sun shines and the sky is blue. Mud and rain are the worst of all walling conditions.



## Langton Herring, 21-22 January

It's a bright, cold, frosty morning at this peaceful site. Six members arrive, including Rob who has driven from Plymouth, and John, who we haven't seen for nearly three years but whose Branch membership was renewed as a surprise Christmas present by his daughter.

Welcome back John!







Rob and Mary enjoy the sun on their backs as the morning warms up. Unfortunately, this warmth will be short lived as the wall remains in shadow for most of the day.

John gives his stint total concentration. He may not have walled with us for a while, but as a stonemason he knows his stone. Much of what some of us know about knapping stone has been learned from John.



While the rest of us build the wall, Sally and Wendy prepare the next foundation trench, working uphill as they go.

We are soon joined by a flock of curious sheep who are grazing the field to the right of this photo. They soon lose interest, however, and wander off to less frosty pastures. I get into a discussion with Mary about the dopiness of cloning sheep as they all look alike. Mary assures me that sheep are individuals and have



different faces. I really should look more closely at them. I know a farmer



who judges sheep and has several thousand of his own. I imagine he can't identify them all individually. That would be too upsetting as most of them end up in Waitrose.



Wendy gives me the victory sign – at least I think it is – as she pauses for a breather from digging out buried stone.

## Sally's best Christmas present



Sally says: 'In our family the adults draw lots in the autumn and just buy one person a present. This year the theme seemed to be jigsaws for some of us. My husband bought our eldest son, Andrew, a jigsaw of Lego bricks arranged in a rainbow pattern. This was just something he'd spotted and thought would be a good idea. Unbeknownst to us his wife had put the self-same model on her wish-list and our middle son bought it for her. So, they both had the same jigsaw! Doh!

However, I was rather luckier. Andrew bought me a fabulous jigsaw depicting 12 Irish walls. It was just as hard to find the right piece as it is in real-life walling. A jigsaw piece with a greyish-brown stone on it is not easy to place in the right wall. The styles of some of the boulderish ones were very similar. Unfortunately, when I finished there were five pieces missing.

For a long time, I had completed one of the pictures all bar one piece and had searched all over for it. Our carpet is very patterned, and Martin found this particular piece when he searched under the table with his head torch. I had a sneaking suspicion I may have hoovered up a couple of pieces when we took the decorations down, so I emptied out the bag – through the small hole at the top. Sure enough, amongst all the dog hair and other rubbish I found two more pieces. Then I set the hoover going and had another look. This resulted in a third piece. Unfortunately, though, I am still missing the last piece which is very annoying. I have searched everywhere but think I must have thrown it away with the bag the pieces were in originally, or else the dog has eaten it. I was very pleased with it otherwise. If anyone wants to get hold of one, they can be found at [Shop | dswai](#)

Postscript – Martin used his creative talents to hand make a jigsaw piece to replace the missing one. No one can tell the difference.

## And Carole's best Christmas present – more stone building!

My sister bought me this 3-D jigsaw of the Colosseum although unlike Sally, I haven't yet attempted it. I have a jigsaw rule in that I never look at the picture when I'm doing the puzzle so I'm looking forward to building this one. Like Sally, I am a lover of jigsaws. Mine came from Hamleys toy shop in London's Regent Street, but I think you can buy them online. The manufacturer is Eyeconic.

Unlike Sally, my jigsaw table is in the kitchen and the floor is wooden, so any dropped pieces are relatively easily found. And I haven't got a cute dog like Button to hoover them up ...

*Hamleys*





## Ham Hill



Geoff and his wallers make good progress preparing the foundation trench for their next section of wall ... and find a tiny ammonite.

We have an excellent section about local geology on our website, maintained by Geoff (<https://dorsetdswa.org.uk/about-dry-stone-walls/geology/>)



To learn more about Ham stone go to:

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/discovering-geology/maps-and-resources/office-geology/ham-hill-somerset/>



The lovely soft tones of winter foliage cover this 'hidden' wall at Ham Hill.



## Valley of Stones



Sally took these photographs of the snowy landscape when she was gorse-clearing with Eucan at the Valley of Stones, near Portesham, which is managed by Natural England as a nature reserve. The Exmoor ponies, here breaking the ice for water, help graze off the re-growth of scrub. In addition, a farmer grazes Longhorn cattle there in Summer.

To learn more about the Valley of Stones go to:

<https://www.uksouthwest.net/dorset/valley-of-stones-national-nature-reserve/>



## Cumbria corner



A snowy sunrise near Cockermouth sent to me by my friends Mike and Jill. Actually, it's the view from their bedroom window – very nice.

And a wintry view over Crummock Water.

More about Cumbria in February's newsletter as I'll be going to HQ to do my

instructor's qualification. There will be twelve of us from around the UK. Apparently, we all have to prove that we can wall (despite having to be a level two waller to be an instructor) before we'll be allowed to proceed to the instructor training. Now, how do you think I'll feel if I drive all the way to Cumbria, fail my walling test, and then have to drive all the way back. I definitely won't be doing the victory sign ...



## Wall art



Another wonderful wall painting seen by my sister in London – this time outside Old Street Station. For a website full of these go to: <https://lookup.london/best-historic-london-murals/>

## Christmas quiz answers

*In 2022, who said:*

1. Them's the breaks. Boris Johnson, on resigning as leader of the Conservative party.
2. I know that we will deliver, we will deliver, we will deliver. Liz Truss, on being elected leader of the Conservative party.
3. Dear, oh dear. King Charles, greeting Liz Truss for her first audience as prime minister with him.
4. Excessive consumption of alcohol is not appropriate in a professional workplace. Sue Gray in her report on 'Alleged gatherings on government premises during Covid restrictions.'
5. For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power. President Joe Biden of President Vladimir Putin.
6. I could be wrong, but Hitler also had Jewish blood. Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister.
7. The British people deserve to know which party is serious about stopping the invasion on our southern coast. Suella Braverman, the Home Secretary.
8. *Dio, Patria e Famiglia non è uno slogan politico ma il più bel manifesto d'amore.* Giorgia Meloni, leader of the Fratelli d'Italia party, who became prime minister of Italy.



9. The jury's still out. Liz Truss, as foreign secretary, on being asked whether Emmanuel Macron was 'friend or foe'.
10. *Nous aussi on t'emmerde*. President Emmanuel Macron, to those refusing vaccination

### ***Royal icing on the cake:***

1. For her Platinum Jubilee, Queen Elizabeth was filmed taking a sandwich out of her handbag. Who was her guest for tea at the time? Paddington Bear; marmalade sandwich
2. In July to whom did Queen Elizabeth award the George Cross in a ceremony at Windsor Castle? The NHS
3. Gaston Browne, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, declared: 'I should say we aspire at some point to become a republic.' Which royal couple was visiting at the time? The Earl and Countess of Wessex
4. In June, the Duchess of Cornwall and Sir Tony Blair were installed at Windsor as what? As a Lady and Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter
5. Which royal duchess said in a magazine interview that she had been told by a South African actor: 'When you married into this family, we rejoiced in the streets the same we did when Mandela was freed from prison'? The Duchess of Sussex
6. At the lying-in-state of Queen Elizabeth, the coffin was guarded by members of the Gentlemen at Arms, the Yeoman of the Guard and which other ceremonial unit of the Sovereign's Bodyguard, with eagle feathers in the caps? The Royal Company of Archers
7. At the state funeral for Queen Elizabeth at Westminster Abbey, Psalm 23, 'The Lord Is My Shepherd', was sung, as it had been at her wedding, to the tune known as what? Crimond
8. At the committal service for Queen Elizabeth in St George's Chapel, Windsor, the orb and sceptre were delivered into the hands of the Dean of Windsor by the Serjeant at Arms. Which red-coated officer of the royal household delivered the Imperial State Crown? The Queen's Bargemaster
9. Misuzulu ka Zwelithini was crowned king of whom, in succession to King Goodwill? The Zulus
10. Princess Märtha Louise, whose boyfriend says he is a shaman, relinquished her royal duties in which country, to focus on her alternative medicine business? Norway

### ***Water, water everywhere ...:***

1. The Volga, the longest river in Europe, flows into which sea? The Caspian
2. Which is the longest European river flowing into the Mediterranean? The Ebro (c.580 miles)
3. The Rhine forms a border of Switzerland with Liechtenstein, Germany and which other country? Austria
4. The 1,500-mile river Ural forms a border between Russia and which other country? Kazakhstan
5. The 1,770-mile Danube flows through four capital cities: Bratislava, Vienna, Belgrade and which other? Budapest
6. The Romans called Italy's longest river the Padus. What is it called now? The Po
7. Europe's fourth-longest river, the Dnieper or Dnipro, at about 1,368 miles, runs from Russia to Ukraine, through which other country? Belarus



8. The five rivers of the Greek underworld were the Acheron, Styx, Phlegethon, Cocytus and which other? Lethe
9. 'Mole digs her selfe a path, by working day and night / (According to her name, to shew her nature right) / And underneath the Earth, for three miles space doth creep,' wrote the 17th-century author of the 15,000-line *Poly-Olbion*, celebrating the topography of England. Who was he? Michael Drayton
10. Which poet concluded his poem on the Tay Bridge Disaster of 1879 with the lines: 'For the stronger we our houses do build / The less chance we have of being killed.'? William McGonagall.

***What are the names behind the initials:***

1. G.K. Chesterton – Gilbert Keith
2. T.S. Eliot – Thomas Stearns
3. J.M.W. Turner – Joseph Mallord William
4. P.J. Harvey – Polly Jean
5. C.S. Lewis – Clive Staples
6. W.S. Gilbert – William Schwenck
7. T.E. Lawrence – Thomas Edward
8. J.K. Rowling – Joanne Kathleen
9. H.G. Wells – Herbert George
10. J.R.R. Tolkien – John Ronald Reuel

***In Memoriam, deaths in 2022:***

1. Who died aged 94, remembered as Virgil Tibbs? Sidney Poitier
2. Which travel writer got off her bike, aged 90? Dervla Murphy
3. Nine times a Derby winner, which jockey made it to the winners' enclosure for the last time aged 86? Lester Piggott
4. Who was the last head of the Soviet Union, who died aged 91? Mikhail Gorbachev
5. Name the inventor of the swingometer, who died aged 98. Sir David Butler
6. Who sang 'You shake my nerves and you rattle my brain' and died aged 87? Jerry Lee Lewis
7. Who brought viewers 25 years of 'Your starter for ten', from 1962 to 1987, and died aged 87? Bamber Gascoigne
8. Who 'like a bat out of hell' was gone when the morning came, aged 74? Meat Loaf (Michael Lee Aday)
9. Who was the single-name composer of the score to *Chariots of Fire* (1981) and died aged 79? Vangelis
10. Who played Dot Cotton in *EastEnders* between 1985 and 2020 and died aged 95? June Brown

## **Upcoming events**

To keep up with Branch events please visit our website: <https://dorsetdswa.org.uk/events/>



and get the dates in your diary. The next Branch walling weekend will be at Crack Lane on 4-5 February.

If you know anyone who would like to participate in one of our weekend courses, please look at the relevant page of our website: <https://dorsetdswa.org.uk/courses/>

The April course on Purbeck is now full but there are still places for 8-9 July and 23-24 September, both at Corton Down. A free course place is offered to an individual meeting one of the following criteria:

- Currently unemployed (the Branch wishes to support people into employment)
- Veteran of the Armed Forces (the Branch wishes to thank those who have served our Country)

Individuals will be required to provide evidence of their status.

You can also purchase a gift voucher which is valid for two years. The weekend course costs £100.

As ever, I welcome news and images from all members. Enjoy the rest of January!

Carole Reeves