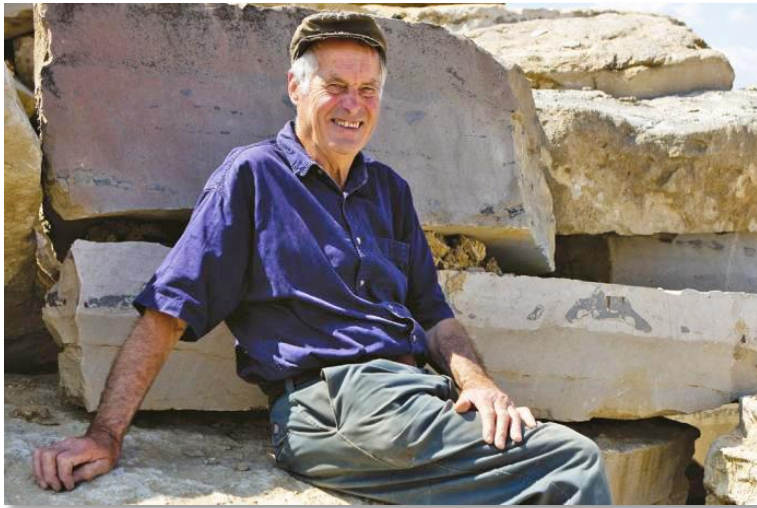


DSWA Dorset News

August 2023

RIP Treleven (Trev) Haysom



I'm sorry to report that on Monday 8 August, Trev passed away. He had been poorly for some time, but we still saw him regularly at Crack Lane. We're very pleased that he lived to see the completion of that wall.

We had hoped to begin a new project for Trev in Haycrafts Lane, Worth Matravers, but it's doubtful whether this will now be high on the family's agenda.

Sea Spray, 29-30 July

Back to this pleasant pastoral site to fill gaps left after the course in April and to tie into some very precarious sections in danger of collapsing completely.

Dave and Sally work on a lengthy stint. The cows seem far too busy munching to amble over to the wall.





Andy, Peter, Mary and I bring another section to height ...



... and get it coped.



The following day turns nasty and only Peter, Phyllis and Andy brave the rain. Everyone laughs when I say that I can't join them because I have to do my cleaning! Oh dear, who wouldn't rather be outdoors, even in the rain.

A nice section of wall completed.



Two weeks later, on Sunday 13 August we return to Sea Spray. Peter spends a good part of the day barrowing stone and generally tidying up the site.



Dave begins work to close a gap further down the wall. Behind him is a mess of barbed wire fencing stacked over a section of wall that we hope to use in the first course of 2024.

The National Trust rangers plan to remove this fencing next year although we'd like to see the back of it sooner. It seems to us to be a hazard for livestock although it was probably piled up by the farmer.

Phyllis and Tim close another gap while my job is to bring the wall between the gaps to height and to top it off with large flat stones. The wall will eventually be coped but the flat stones will (hopefully) deter sheep from clambering over the wall and 'sheep wrecking' it.

We won't be back at Sea Spray until sometime in September.



Langton Herring, 5-6 August



We were running out of stone at this site so Sally and John Mowlem, who owns the field where we're re-building this wall, went foraging.

Sally says the stone was 'all picked by my own fair hand out of the fields on the ridge and loaded by hand by John and brought down. It all

went into the wall over the weekend.'

By the time I get to the site, Sally and Nigel have moved most of the stone out of the trailer. Nigel was on the April course at Sea Spray and this is his first weekend walling with the Branch.

There's a lot to do. Wendy and I opt to clear a further section of stone while others build the wall. In fact,



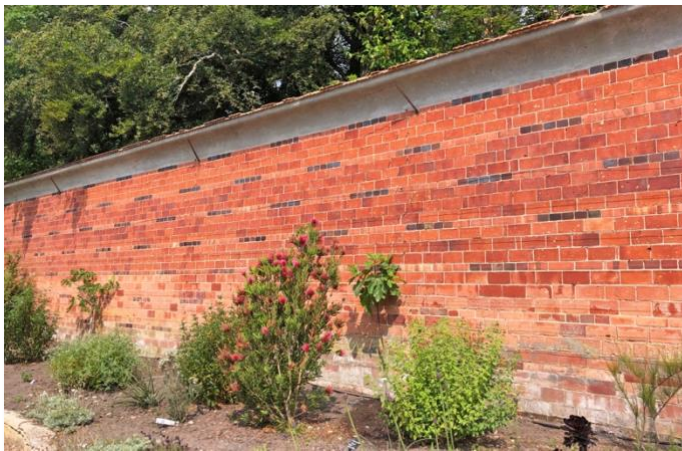
this will be the final section to clear because the rest of the wall (about 20 metres) is in a relatively sound condition and very little needs to be dismantled. Once we have securely tied into the old wall, Sally will create a new cheek end over the winter, and this project will be finished. It started out as Sally's lockdown project!

Wendy and Phyllis cope a stint ...

... and five wallers soon build a few courses.

By mid-afternoon the wind has picked up considerably and it becomes increasingly squally. Raincoats are hastily donned (below), and we think about calling it a day. We'll return in September.

This has been a lovely AONB site – very peaceful, with stunning scenery and a wood in which to shelter during very bad weather. Not to mention Sally's house directly opposite the field where tea and delicious cakes have been frequently offered to weary wallers.



Careys Secret Garden, Wareham

Sally mentioned that she had been to this recently discovered Victorian garden, and that the wall, whilst not dry stone, was stunning. In fact, the garden had lain undiscovered for decades and the wall was completely covered in ivy

and other vegetation. This had helped to preserve its stonework and the original colour. The ornamental alcove in a corner of the wall (right) which includes a small peephole into the woods outside the garden is beautifully built.

This garden is well worth a visit. See the website for more details: www.careyssecretgarden.co.uk



Ham Hill



Since Geoff became a ranger at Ham Hill Country Park, walling seems to have become a very genteel affair with tools being brought in by mini-truck and an all-weather gazebo. Whatever next?

If anyone fancies joining Geoff and his team of picnicking wallers on a very beautiful and historic site, please contact him directly (rowland.geoff@gmail.com). Walling at Ham Hill is every Monday.

Merrie on the high wire



Well, none of her grandchildren will brave it so Merrie gives them a lesson in ziplining. It is Swanage Carnival week and Merrie prepares to zipline across Prince Albert Gardens. She and I had spent the previous day with 12-year-old Milly and her mum attempting the ‘What’s not my Line’ event. No ziplines in this competition which has many of the local shops and businesses placing an object in their window which they normally do not sell and all you have to do is find it! Easier said than done.

I wasn’t present when Merrie ziplined across Swanage, but I would definitely have been up there too ...

I ziplined in Costa Rica (right) which is pretty scary over the rainforest or a canyon but an exhilarating experience.

However, for some South American children, a zipwire is the only means of getting to school:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzKn3BVxKA4



Tyneham, 19-20 August



After Peter's three training weekends for candidates preparing for the qualifications in September, this weekend – run by Dave – is the first of the 'mock' exams. Can the participants strip down and rebuild their stints in seven hours? Dave offers advice to John as he dismantles his level two cheek end stint. To John's left, Andy and Martin are taking down their level one sections.



Mary and Tim, both going for level two, race each other to take down and safely stack their stones. They will be marked on this. It goes without saying that good attention to health and safety is fundamental to both personal welfare and site management.

During the day many visitors engage Dave, Phyllis and I in conversation, wanting to learn about dry stone walling. A few express interest in our courses so I hand out our new business cards, designed and printed by Geoff.



Foundations and first lift ...



... John, Andy and Martin seem to be fairly evenly matched in terms of speed. Maybe Andy just has the edge.



Martin is creating a good wall with straight courses but worries that he won't be able to get to height in seven hours. Dave has heard this before from wallers at this stage of practice prior to the exams. He advises Martin to spend less time dressing stone (like John, Martin is a stone mason) and more time putting it on the wall.

Below: Mary is on a roll and rapidly getting to height.



By late afternoon, Andy has coped his stint and completes the wall in the allotted time.



Mary also finishes her section on Saturday. Knowing that it's possible to do this helps relieve exam stress and gives time to focus on improving technique.



Sunday ... Martin and John pick up steam and the walls are almost at height. For some reason there isn't enough hearting and so Phyllis and I spend an hour or so bashing up stone to feed the wallers.



At last, by mid-afternoon, John and Martin begin coping. Both have built very good walls and Dave is certain that they will reduce their time considerably during the next 'mock' at the beginning of September.



The same is true for Tim who has been here before with the level one 'time trial' and passed with flying colours.

The Melplash Show 24 August

The day before the Melplash Show, Phyllis, Mary, Wendy, Steve and I arrive at the site to set up our pitch. Sherborne Stone delivers our four tonnes mid-morning and Steve jumps onto the lorry to help offload the bags. It's a beautiful sunny day and we hope for good weather for the show.





The driver uses a nifty fork-lift to transport the stone next to our gazebo which, unlike Geoff's at Ham Hill, is definitely *not* an all-weather shelter.

Steve sets up the batter frames and lines for the wall.



Below: Everything is set up fairly quickly and we take a coffee break.



We have more or less the same pitch as last year and it's nice to say hello to some of the same traders we saw in 2022. The layout of the show doesn't change much from year to year.



We take it in turns to take in the rest of the show. Sheep and cow judging is particularly popular. I remark to Phyllis that I have never seen such clean cows – not a speck of poo on their bums and tails. I later learn that talcum powder is sometimes used on white cows to give them that extra sparkle.

The morning of the show is murky and drizzly. It has rained overnight and the inside of the gazebo is wet. Fortunately, we have covered most of the contents with tarpaulins, and because we all forgot to bring wiping cloths, we use Geoff's onesie to mop up the puddles. Geoff very kindly pays for us all to have breakfast baps – bacon and bacon / sausage... yum, thank you Geoff.



Harry, Lenny, Dougal and Sam pose on their podium in front of an admiring crowd. They are very well behaved – no doubt accustomed to the celebrity life.

I just learned that thousands of UK sheep embryos have just been shipped to the US, most notably those of the cute Valais Blacknose sheep – not that you can see their noses or any facial features (<https://www.fwi.co.uk/livestock/sheep/400000-of-sheep-embryos-shipped-to-us>)



Meanwhile, Geoff and Andy have made a start on the wall. As ever, the stone delivery doesn't include hearting and we are not allowed to cut up stone because, once the wall comes down at the end of the day, it has to be bagged up and is collected by the quarry.



However, Geoff has brought his instructor's chart, and this illustration shows a cross section of wall. We note that quite a few visitors throughout the day take photographs of the chart as well as the wall.

And here comes Sheridan the Sheepdog, much to the amusement of my fellow wallers. Last year, some of you might remember that I thought this mutt was real – well, not exactly real but that a small person was inside a costume. I had a nice conversation with it until someone pointed out that it was an animatronics dog and that its operator was pressing the buttons and speaking its lines from a distance of about ten metres.

I have never lived this down, so I didn't succumb to foolhardiness this year but let others do the daft stuff. Turns out it is only the kids who are fooled, and not for long.





Steve, Andy, Mary, Geoff and Phyllis – happy wallers at the end of the day. It proves to be a very successful show judging by the numbers of visitors. The weather stayed fine, and it was comfortably warm rather than being very hot like last year. We had lots of interested visitors and quite a few children enjoyed building (and demolishing) the kids' wall.

The only downside (apart from dropping a large stone on my foot – and I wasn't wearing steelies) is the time it takes to get out of the field where all our cars are parked. It takes the best part of an hour before I'm on the A35 and heading home.

Some of my fellow wallers will be setting up tomorrow for the Oak Fair at Stock Gaylard Estate, near Sturminster Newton, for the Oak Fair which runs on Saturday and Sunday.

The Oak Fair, 26-27 August



Set-up day on Friday 25 August, and the stone from Stalbridge Quarries is delivered on the main drive, a fair distance from our pitch. The driver didn't want to risk being stuck in the grass!

Sally and Wendy inspect it for quality!



A Stock Gaylard driver drops the stone next to the batter frames, and soon the site has been set up and ready for the weekend.





He starts building while the rain comes down and Mary does her 'Singing in the Rain' dance.



The finished wall looks great, especially with the corner as an additional feature.





There's more than one way of building a wall as these children know. The kids' wall proves extremely popular. Wendy said: 'This was probably because it was one of the first pitches they saw with anything they could do. Great fun to knock down except for one boy who said he didn't want to and so we had to wait until he was out of sight before knocking it over ready for the next child.' These little girls are extremely proud of their colourful certificates (photos used with permission).

Upcoming events

To keep up with Branch events please visit our website: <https://dorsetdswa.org.uk/events/> and get the dates in your diary.

Our final weekend course of the year, on 23-24 September at Corton Down, is now fully booked. We won't be holding another course until April or May 2024. We have given out a number of Branch leaflets and business cards to visitors at the shows expressing interest in next year's courses.

A mock exam for those taking qualifications will be at Tyneham this coming weekend, 2-3 September. The exam date at Tyneham for levels one and two will be on Saturday 16 September. It would be great if Branch members could come along and support the candidates. If you haven't been to Tyneham for a while, the refurbished toilet block is now open, and there is a snack shack run by the Salt Pig – proper coffee, delicious wraps, quiches and cakes.

DSWA 2024 Calendar



The DSWA calendar is now available price £6. If you order from me you won't have to pay postage but you will need to collect at a weekend walling venue.

I will be doing a bulk order so please let me know if you would like a calendar(s).

Until next month, enjoy the season of foraging for free food, and as ever, I welcome contributions from all members.

Carole Reeves