

DSWA Dorset News

December 2023

Corton, 2 December



What a shock to arrive at Corton on the first really cold day of the winter. Driving up to the site didn't seem too bad but the day never really warmed up, and when I left at about 3 pm, the drive down the steep track was decidedly treacherous. It was difficult keeping control of the car on the frozen track.

Tim and Andy begin by chipping stone out of the icy ground with mini mattocks while Phyllis (below left) considers tackling her



section with a full size mattock in order to begin a new foundation trench. She is joined by Mary and Sally (above right) and they make some headway although it is hard going.



Phyllis and Mary (left) take a break to do some coping, and there is a hint of sun breaking through the mist.

It's enough to cheer Andy, Tim and me. Despite the freezing conditions we have managed to bring our section almost to height. Andy even removes his SAS balaclava.

Walling is cancelled the following day.

Corton, 16-17 December



From ice to mud! The track up to Corton was decidedly a slippery slope, and Sally's car was stuck fast in the mud. Phyllis and Karen give her a push as she skids backwards to a less sticky parking spot.

The foundation trench is easier to navigate this weekend. We welcome Tush, who hasn't been out with us at all this year although he has been walling everywhere else! We hand him a mattock and off he goes.

Phyllis, Mary and Karen make a start on their section.





Wendy and I take the less strenuous option and bring an unfinished section of wall to height. However, when Mary leaves at lunchtime, and I watch her wheels spinning in the mud before her car is given a helping push by Phyllis and Tush, I panic and decide to leave as well. When I changed my car back in May to better accommodate my walling tools, I had

planned to get a 4WD but instead bought a big automatic road tourer which is great for road touring but useless for off-road. So, my car is also pushed out of the mud, and I head for home.



Sunday proves a drier day so that Phyllis, Tush and Andy are able to make headway with the foundations (left).

Right: Sally and Fiona complete two sections of wall, so everyone makes good headway.

We bid farewell to Corton until the new year.



Ham Hill



Geoff says: 'The 450-metre wall on the Ham Hill plateau dividing Strouds Meadow is now finished! Coped and fully stock proof it looks amazing with the winter sun reflecting off the golden Ham Hill stone. There is still a short slumped, but stock proof, section that SWEDSWA will still be able to rebuild for their weekend courses in May. For a few more years, at least.'



Left: wallers restoring a very old section of the Strouds wall which runs down the hillfort ramparts to join with the old (c.1600) parish boundary wall between Montacute and Stoke sub Hamdom.



Right: The approach with these walls is sensitive restoration, rather than a complete rebuild.



You can see where this ancient section of wall begins – beyond the gate at far left.



Geoff says: ‘Paul and Margaret continue to be my regular DSWA/Branch accomplices at Ham Hill. We have also benefited from the support of Ranger colleagues and other Ham Hill volunteers for site preparation, stone moving etc. All our volunteers are now registered as Ham Hill Volunteers and covered by Somerset Council insurance. I’m hoping one or two will become DSWA members. We should have some candidates (1-3?) for Tyneham Assessments next Autumn, from volunteers - work experience students and ranger colleagues.’



Left: 'Bracken has now been cleared from both sides of the wall. We will continue flexible rotational grazing and cutting management of the plateau meadows to encourage calcareous grassland flora. Maximising the flowering season will encourage pollinators, such as the Shrill Carder Bee. We will keep the walls as a visible landscape feature but

retaining some rough overgrown scrubby areas for habitat diversity including stonechat nesting sites.

We have just received a carved 2023 date stone from Harvey Stone (right) and with support from Ham Hill Country Park, Somerset Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. In the New Year we will build this into the wall near the walkers gate at the north end of Strouds Meadow.



We still have more than 5 km of walls, in various states of dereliction, to attend to within the Country Park.'



Geoff, in his trademark tomato-head beanie, taking a chance that his walling colleagues have placed those copes securely in an upright position. Sooner him than me.

Sheep on the wall, Bowlees Nature Reserve, Teesdale



Intrepid walkers, Mike and Jill, sent me this photo of sheep walking a wall. The carved caption, which begins on the reverse, reads: ‘A wonderful place to be a walker ... reverts to scrub, once it’s gone it’s lost. A farmer’.



Lovely carvings of insects on stone.

Seiryu-en Garden, Kyoto



I forgot to include this beautiful wall in November's newsletter when I featured Japanese walling. Clearly it has been made using dressed stone, but I was impressed by the sinuous lines of the coursing next to a water feature.

Seiryu-en Garden was created in 1965 by the city of Kyoto as a reception facility for visiting dignitaries. It incorporates a traditional Japanese garden and a western-style garden with verdant lawns. The stones were moved from the site of the former villa of the Seminokura family, wealthy Kyoto merchants in the early Edo period (c.17th- 18th century).



We are Dorset!



"Building a dry stone wall, if you must know!"

I'm pleased to present the Branch walling statistics for 2023:

We achieved a total of 116 walling days at 8 locations around the county and into South Somerset.

A total of 24 Branch members contributed 398.5 walling days (198 ladies & 192 gents) – the 0.5 represents half days worked by individual wallers.

We ran 5 training courses at 3 locations, at which 8 Branch members instructed / assisted. They contributed 48 walling days (27 ladies & 21 gents).

We took part in 3 county shows – Sherborne Castle Show, the Melplash Show and the Oak Fair, in which 8 Branch members took part. They contributed 35 days (18 ladies & 17 gents).

We got 6 wallers through their qualifications in September – 4 at level 2, and 2 at level 1.

The year's 'top four' Branch wallers – those who have been out the most are Carole (61 days); Geoff (50.5 days); Phyllis (44.5 days) and Sally (41 days).

In addition, a number of Dorset branch members also wall with other branches and for other organisations including Eucan and the National Trust.

And finally, a lovely 'Christmas' tree from South Australia. It is full of Rainbow Lorikeets and was sent to me by a friend in Adelaide who is a guide in the Botanic Gardens. I'm sure she won't mind me sharing it with you.

Photo: Judith Morton

Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and, as ever, I welcome news and images from all members.

The Christmas Quizzes start on the next page. Answers in the January newsletter.



Carole Reeves

Christmas Quiz

By popular demand (well, at least one person said they enjoyed last year's quiz feature) I've come up with a few more trivia quiz questions to tide you over the boring bits of 'fatten-up fortnight'. Of course, some of you may be off to exciting destinations, in which case you have no excuse not to send me interesting images of walls and other stone features seen on your travels.

Questions set by David Attenborough (well, they could have been):

- 1) The Brown Recluse is a venomous creature, but is it a) Spider b) snake c) Scorpion
- 2) Sheep are widely farmed in the UK, but as of 2018 how many sheep and lambs were in the UK? a) 10.5 million b) 22.5 million c) 52.5 million
- 3) Native to Ethiopia, what type of animal is a Gelada? a) Bird b) Snake c) Monkey
- 4) Shiba Inus are small hunting dogs, native to which country?
- 5) Which breed of dog, a favourite of the Chinese royals, is thought to be a cross between a Pekingese and the Lhasa Apso and has a long double coat?
- 6) The Komodo Dragon is native to which area of the planet?
- 7) Found in all water regions of the world and feeding on tiny fish, algae and plankton, their name is synonymous with a derogatory name for a small person.
- 8) The Shrew is a relatively solitary animal that weighs up to 4 ounces, but what is its top speed? a) 8mph b) 16mph c) 32mph.

Know your flowers

- 1) What flower did the Victorians call a gilliflower?
- 2) Which blue flower of the genus *Veronica* is also the name of the ship which was to accompany the Mayflower with the Pilgrim Fathers?
- 3) Which daisy-like flower, which is the national flower of Mexico, gets its name from an 18th century Swedish Botanist?
- 4) Which flower according to legend bloomed everywhere that lord Buddha walked. These days its seeds can be eaten raw, and its stamens dried to produce fragrant teas?
- 5) The anniversary of which prime minister's death is commemorated in the UK as Primrose Day?

6) Which small flower, usually with five blue or purple petals, is associated with freemasonry and has the scientific name *Myosotis*?

7) *Lathyrus odoratus* is a flowering plant used in early experiments in genetics, by what name is this flower better known?

8) Which flower is often called the 'winter rose' or 'Christmas rose'?

Quote unquote, or Who Said What in 2023:

1) 'I need your support, now more than ever. More than I imagined I would. More important than any of that is that you please, if you can, stay free.'

2) 'It's the best day ever. So was yesterday, and so is tomorrow, and every day from now until forever.'

3) My dad had an expression. He said, 'Don't tell me what you value. Show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value.'

4) 'Nobody warned me that it was against the rules, because I would have remembered that.'

5) 'When I bought my first property, going abroad, the EasyJet, coffee, gym, Netflix lifestyle didn't exist. I used to walk to work with a sandwich. And on payday I'd go for a pizza, and to a movie, and buy a lipstick. I don't want to belittle those people who can't do it. But there are loads of people who can do it and don't.'

6) 'Christ is risen, Alleluia. He is risen indeed, Alleluia, Alleluia.'

7) 'The working class is back. We refuse to be meek; we refuse to be humble; we refuse to wait for politicians and policy-writers – and we refuse to be poor anymore.'

8) 'I think it was Margaret Thatcher who said that every prime minister needs a Willy. A woman like me doesn't have one.'

Royal Flush

1) Which athlete challenged Prince Harry to a sprint on a Jamaican tour?

2) Charles I was imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle before he was beheaded, where is Carisbrooke Castle?

3) What condition did many of Victoria's offspring suffer from?

- 4) As well as Scotland, where else was Mary Queen of Scots once Queen of?
- 5) His Royal Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the current ruler of which country?
- 6) What was the name of the woman who married Edward VIII?
- 7) Who is married to Autumn Kelly?
- 8) As used by the late Queen, what became an unlikely Latin catchphrase in the 1990s?

In Memorium, deaths in 2023

- 1) Anna Mae Bullock, born 26 November 1939, made her recording debut under the name Little Ann, before adopting the name with which she would achieve global stardom. As of May 2023, she had reportedly sold about 100m-150m records worldwide. What was her adopted name?
- 2) Battersea Dogs and Cats Home named its vet hospital after this entertainer who died in March. What was his name and the name of his incredible drag act with which he first found widespread fame?
- 3) This designer helped defined the look of 1960s London and opened her first shop on Kings Road, Chelsea, in 1955. Who was she and what was her shop called?
- 4) One of Ireland's greatest songwriters passed away in November. Who was he? Where was he born, and what was the name of his band?
- 5) This lady became the first female speaker of the House of Commons. What was her name and when was she elected Speaker?
- 6) One of the most celebrated British actors, died in June, and was also an MP. Where was this person first elected?
- 7) He was regarded as one of the great American writers. What was his name and which of his novels won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction?
- 8) This person was a mainstay of astrology in the UK, but did she see her own demise coming? What was her stage name and her real name?

Christmas walling word search

R	T	Y	M	L	K	W	A	D	D	O	N	P	O	L	C	D	T	O	V
S	G	G	N	I	R	R	E	H	N	O	T	G	N	A	L	I	S	S	T
B	E	P	I	N	S	F	Y	X	D	C	Q	U	B	K	V	Y	L	Q	A
A	B	G	H	E	T	I	J	N	N	M	O	C	D	I	P	D	K	U	M
T	R	O	S	S	U	D	O	G	O	N	T	H	E	R	O	O	F	A	L
P	O	R	D	G	F	H	K	K	I	J	V	P	W	U	R	R	Z	R	M
I	G	Z	R	Y	F	C	O	R	T	O	N	A	L	E	T	S	T	E	R
G	A	R	A	K	I	L	B	C	Y	G	H	R	S	O	E	E	I	A	U
S	B	E	C	I	N	K	T	V	A	E	M	T	J	N	S	T	P	N	Q
I	D	M	S	S	G	S	I	D	R	I	M	Y	O	P	H	D	S	D	M
N	C	M	A	L	E	B	P	R	X	A	Y	H	C	M	A	S	X	C	U
B	B	A	M	E	K	R	U	I	R	H	W	A	Z	H	M	W	P	O	W
L	H	H	T	O	I	P	V	B	O	I	U	T	R	A	L	A	R	M	T
A	N	B	S	F	R	U	L	E	B	H	N	C	A	M	K	P	A	P	Q
N	O	U	I	P	B	E	M	D	W	L	A	I	Q	H	L	E	E	A	I
K	I	L	R	U	T	H	E	B	R	O	Y	O	S	I	T	I	Y	S	B
E	T	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S	P	U	D	L	K	C	W	S	E
T	A	F	C	B	G	K	H	J	V	Z	N	X	M	L	A	F	E	D	T
S	R	O	P	E	M	I	N	I	M	A	T	T	O	C	K	N	N	L	A
A	B	K	O	C	O	U	R	S	E	S	H	V	M	P	U	A	D	I	T
H	E	F	L	K	R	P	O	Y	U	S	B	H	E	A	R	T	I	N	G
O	L	U	G	D	D	A	S	T	G	Y	V	Q	U	O	B	Z	V	W	I
H	E	S	E	A	S	P	R	A	Y	B	E	L	K	M	O	N	T	P	B
B	C	F	I	Y	Z	E	G	A	L	L	I	V	M	A	H	E	N	Y	T

Here's another time waster but I love solving these. Possibly one to keep the kids or grandchildren busy while you sneak a crafty gin / vodka / rum / whisky / beer in the kitchen. After my recent travels through Japan I have developed a taste for sake.

Corton

Isle of Purbeck

Forest marble

Sea Spray

Kirrin Island

Dog on the Roof

Square and Compass

Courses

Christmas pud

Ham Hill

Pins

Club hammer

Langton Herring

Party hat

Pigs in blankets

Stuffing

Hearting

Mini mattock

Dorset DSWA

Tyneham village

Christmas cards

Waddon

Bubbly

Celebration

New Year

Lines

Portesham

Ivy

