

# DSWA Dorset News

---

December 2024

## Donkey Down, 30 November – 1 December



The start of another stint on this wall. Mary, Phyllis, Sally, Fiona and I begin laying foundations for a new section of wall – the last that we will accomplish this year.

In the New Year we'll be moving to Langton Herring to repair a section of wall around the parish church of St Peter's, Langton Herring. We were there in 2018 doing a spot of restoration on the same wall, apparently without official permission from the diocese although that wasn't our fault. This time, the faculty has been signed off and we'll be working on another part of the wall.

Meanwhile, Fiona and Phyllis build another bunny lunky in an attempt to prevent another rabbitown being constructed beneath the wall. The objective is to encourage bunny migration



to another part of the field through the Great Wall of Donkey Down. There's a children's book in there somewhere.



It's not particularly warm but everyone looks cheerful.

## Donkey Down, 14-15 December

Saturday is sunny but with a fairly brisk breeze. Andy and Sally get to work on the section of wall incorporating the bunny lunky ...





... while William, Mary and I aim to get the stints where we laid the foundations a fortnight ago up to a decent height by the end of the weekend.

The sun comes out and the strange cloud formation on the horizon resembles a fire or belching industrial chimneys. I have a weird imagination.

But, talking of fires, William produces a patio heater at break time – a first for Dorset DSWA!



Tucked behind the wall for shelter with a patio heater and Sally's home-made mince pies it's a slightly longer coffee and lunch break than usual. However, it is nearly Christmas and only the hardest wallers turn out during the winter months especially at Donkey Down where there is no shelter from the prevailing winds.



Winter gives us some of the best sunsets as these photos taken by William show. It's been a lovely day.



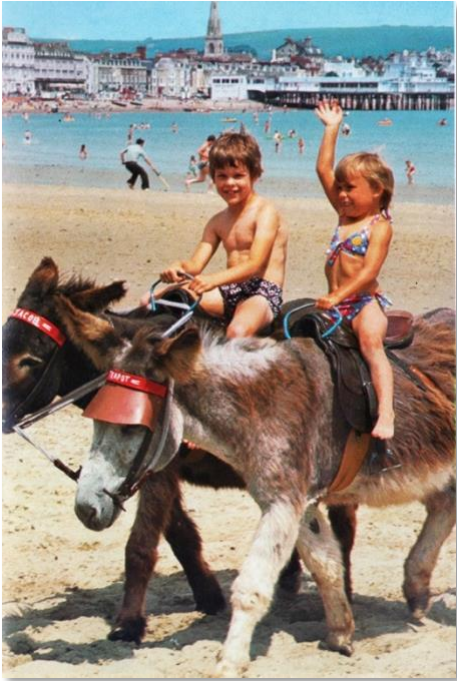
Back to reality on Sunday which is dull and cloudy. William spends the first 45 minutes barrowing left over stone from further down the wall to the site where we are now working. This is our last day at Donkey Down until next March.

Sally isn't best pleased with me because I have created a nasty running joint in my otherwise nicely coursed stint. I try to pass it off as part of the Japanese philosophy that embraces imperfection, but Sally doesn't seem impressed, especially as I can't repair it with gold (kintsugi – check it out if you haven't seen it). I'm afraid I stubbornly carried on walling over it but yes, I know I have to go back and repair it ...



And now we are almost at the end of the weekend. William, Karen, Mary and I have completed four or five courses on these stints and Sally has come to height on hers. And so, we say farewell to Donkey Down until March 2025.

For those of you interested in how Donkey Down got its name, it was, according to Phyllis, the winter quarters of the donkeys who worked the beach at Weymouth. And judging by how these gentle animals were quite poorly treated for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, I'm sure they enjoyed their months on Donkey Down rather more than their lives during the holiday season.



## Ham Hill in the Snow



The third week in November saw areas of Dorset and the South-West blanketed in snow. It really does change the appearance of the landscape. Geoff took these photographs of walls that have been built by volunteers over the past year. They look quite mystical.





The Butchers-Witcombe wall now finished. It stands rather majestically above the deep Witcombe Valley, once the site of a medieval village. The photograph shows the steep Iron Age rampart slopes of the ancient hill fort.

Right: Artist's impression of how the village might have looked. It was abandoned in the 16<sup>th</sup> century although the pond and watercourse remain.



South Somerset District Council



Left: A fresh stone delivery ready for next year's walling activities ...



... and right: clearing out residual stone left by the wall ready for establishment of wildflower rich margins in the new year. Also, to recover stone for walling activities in 2025.



A nice cheek end.

Geoff says: 'It's great to see that the Stonechats are still about on the Strouds wall.'  
Photo: Khoitran1957

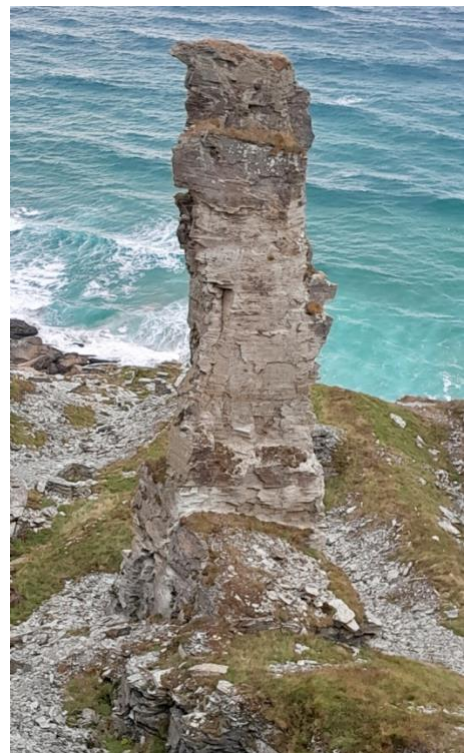


## Mary's Cornish walls



Mary says: 'I took these photos on a walk just west of Tintagel in Cornwall last September. The slate stile in the wall (left) is eroded by years of hob nailed boots going to and from the slate quarries on the cliff.'

You can see how much stone has been quarried from the stack left behind (right). The other wall (below) is a typical example of Cornish wavy (herringbone) walling.'







## William's walls in the Yorkshire Dales



Above Left: A stile near Aysgarth Falls, and right: stairway to Heaven, Coverdale Valley. Will they or won't they climb over?

I



Left: Gated stile near Coverham Bridge, North Yorkshire.

William says: ‘I have provided no narrative beyond the titles. We weren’t on a walking holiday in the Yorkshire Dales but the first set of wall photos round Carperby and Aysgarth did involve a circular walk. The second set of photos from the Coverdale Valley involved a dog walk when I finally felt well enough to venture beyond our holiday house (I’d had proper flu we now think) and then a drive to the end of the road at Swineside stopping to take a few wall pics on the way. I obviously have no walling lingo to speak of, so my descriptors are amateurish, but I appreciate the beauty of the walls in all their different guises.’



Harder than it looks to create a wall like this. Note the typical Yorkshire through stones sticking proud of the wall.

Right: It's still standing – just!



Above left: Nice level 3 wall built on a slope, East Witton, Wensleydale.



Above: An interesting wall at Carperby. I love the huge jumper but what's that running joint on the right? No fewer than five courses deep!

## Lyme Regis wall



We received an email from Stuart who participated in one of our weekend courses last year. He then built this wall in Lyme Regis. Stuart says: 'Update! Finished the wall (finally!) and so pleased with it. A proper dry stone waller would find fault all over, but major no-no's like running joints are few and with all the mouseholes she is going to be a labyrinthine home for all sorts of small creatures :>).

Made with whatever stone I could beg, steal, buy or borrow, this is no way a uniform wall but a hybrid, random mongrel with layers of slate and Ham stone mixed with Purbeck, Blue Lias and other stuff whose origin I can't even begin to fathom. Appropriately Jurassic I feel.



Heartings were an issue as this was a domestic situation not a field where stuff was lying about but I managed one way or another. It has drawn lots of favourable comment from neighbours and the many walkers who pass by (we're on the SW Coastal path) and as we have inserted small shells, lovely stones and simply odd things collected over the years - even driftwood - into the ledges and spaces in the wall, I think others will add to it as they pass.

A huge thank you to you and the other team members for helping to give me the confidence to do this on last year's course.' Amazing Stuart – a really stunning and original wall

## The Stone Trust – Waller of the Month



SAM BRAKELEY (*Vermont*)– My business, Hermit Woods Trailbuilders, LLC, in Sharon Vermont, builds trails and trail structures across New England, frequently using stone to facilitate recreation in challenging locations. This 60-step stone staircase leads up a narrow defile in the cliffs at rock-climbing destination Bolton Dome, Vermont. All steps are mica schist, laboriously imported into the site from nearby Quimby Mountain Stone. But what was once a challenging scramble for climbers (particularly when loaded down with equipment) is now an easy jaunt up the steps. For more information see: <https://thestonetrust.org/december-waller-of-the-month-sam-brakeley/>

### Upcoming events

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

During January and February members walling will be in the much more sheltered location of Langton Herring churchyard. We restored a section of this wall a number of years ago and have now been asked to restore another section.

Sat 11th/ Sun 12th January – The Saturday will be clearing the wall of the ivy/ bramble which has been instrumental in its collapse.

There will be NO walling on this day. Walling will commence on the Sunday.

Sat 25th/ Sun 26th January - Walling

Sat 8th/ Sun 9th February - Walling

Sat 22nd/ Sun 23rd February - Walling

These dates are all at the churchyard in Langton Herring. We will be able to park in the Elm Tree Inn car park, just opposite the churchyard entrance.

For directions, Google The Elm Tree Inn, Langton Herring. The pub is closed but the car park is open.

Please contact Phyllis ([warrenphyllis@rocketmail.com](mailto:warrenphyllis@rocketmail.com)) if you plan to come to any of the walling sessions above. If anything changes Phyllis will send out the relevant information.

As ever, I welcome contributions from all members, particularly if you have been travelling and seen some interesting structures – or like Stuart from Lyme Regis, built your own.

## **Dorset 2024**

I'm pleased to present the Branch walling statistics for 2024:

We achieved a total of 59 walling days at 6 locations around the county and into South Somerset.

A total of 20 Branch members contributed 226 walling days (158.5 ladies & 67.5 gents) – the 0.5 represents half days worked by individual wallers. Eleven members came out five or more times and 9 walled on 10 or more occasions.

We ran 3 training courses at 3 DSWA locations and a further 4 on South Purbeck for National Trust rangers, staff and volunteers. Altogether, 6 Branch members instructed / assisted. They contributed 40 walling days (20 ladies & 20 gents).

We took part in 3 county shows – Sherborne Castle Show, the Melplash Show and the Oak Fair, as well as 2 local fairs – Stoborough and Portesham, in which 12 Branch members took part. They contributed 45 days (32 ladies & 13 gents).

We didn't run a qualifications day this year but one member of Dorset / SWEDSWA branch passed his level 2 in Cumbria.

The year's 'top four' Branch wallers – those who have been out the most are Carole (48 days); Sally (44.5 days); Phyllis (43.5 days) and Mary (35 days).

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

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

As ever, I've come up with a range of Christmas quizzes which may fill a gap when you're not stuffing your faces with seasonal fayre. No prizes but answers in the January newsletter.

I hope you all have a joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year. Hope to see some new faces on the walls in 2025.

Carole Reeves

## Christmas Quiz

*Who said What in 2024?*

- 1) 'Do you see a Britain where people feel, with the certainty that they deserve, that the future will be better for their children? Because when I was growing up, that's what we believed.'
- 2) 'I want to thank my best friend Zoe for playing Barbie with me growing up, and being by my side forever ... I want to thank my choir teachers – Ms Brigham, for believing in me, and Miss T, you didn't like me, but you were good at your job.'
- 3) 'She came along to actually watch me for the first time at the US Open. I actually vomited twice in that match. Once right in front of where she was sitting. I then stood up and vomited on my opponent's racket bag, and she still seemed to like me, so I knew she was a keeper after that.'
- 4) 'I said explain IVF, very quickly. And within about two minutes, I understood it ... And we really are the party for IVF. We want fertilization, and it's all the way.'
- 5) 'If you want to feel pretty and still punch a guy in the face, it's amazing.'
- 6) 'Today in Kabul a female cat has more freedom than a woman. A cat may go sit on her front stoop and feel the sun on her face, she may chase a squirrel in the park. A squirrel has more

rights than a girl in Afghanistan today because the public parks have been closed to women and girls by the Taliban. A bird may sing in Kabul, but a girl may not in public.'

7) 'Without doubt, we wouldn't be anywhere without Luke Skywalker, so all my thanks are there for him and the entire Jedi knights.'

8) 'I post infrequently, and this is my last. Musk's toy has been colonised by narcissists, the brain-dead and advertisements. I shall nonetheless miss the 'wit and wisdom' of the best among whom I have friends. The latter I shall still see. To the rest, goodbye. Life is too short.'

9) 'You are the media now.'

10) 'I was going to sail around the globe in the world's smallest ship, but I bottled it.'

*Who died in 2024?*

1) Known for her wit in both comedic and dramatic roles, she had an extensive career on stage and screen for over seven decades and was one of Britain's most recognisable and prolific actresses. May have been best known for her role as Professor McGonagall in the Harry Potter film.

2) Spent eight decades making hits with the likes of Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, and Michael Jackson. He was a producer, composer, arranger, instrumentalist, impresario, author, mentor, magazine founder, the celebrity father of celebrity children. He imbued a head-spinning variety of musical genres—jazz, pop, R&B, easy listening—with sparkle and sophistication. With 28 Grammys, he's currently the third-highest winner of all time.

3) Credited for proposing in 1964 the existence of the so-called 'God particle' that helped explain how matter formed after the Big Bang. Helped scientists in getting a better understanding of one of the most fundamental riddles of the universe: how the Big Bang created something out of nothing 13.8 billion years ago.

4) Famous for brawling with a protester who struck him with an egg while out campaigning during the 2001 general election. He had a stormy relationship with the press who dubbed him 'two Jags' and who mocked his at times jumbled syntax in statements and interviews.

5) First female presenter on BBC Radio 1 in 1970 and the first female presenter for BBC Television's 'The Old Grey Whistle Test' where she stayed for four years.

6) Passed away in the Arctic penal colony where he was serving a 19-year sentence. Before his arrest, campaigned against official corruption, organized major anti-Kremlin protests and ran for public office.



7) Bestselling novelist whose 40 works of fiction sold more than 90 million copies in 40 languages and topped bestselling charts in both the U.S. and the U.K. The British-American novelist's works were so popular, 10 of her books were adapted for television films and mini-series.

8) Orthopaedic surgeon at University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff. 'My father used to say "professional sport's not for you" when I was playing tennis as a youngster. You need a proper job'. Capped 55 times for his country.

9) A prolific and celebrated actor, starred in *Ordinary People*, *Kluge*, and the *Hunger Games* franchise. Memorable for a nude sex scene opposite Julie Christie in movie based on a short story by Daphne Du Maurier.

10) Doctor who went for a walk on a Greek holiday island and got lost. Named medical journalist of the year by the British Medical Association in 1995.

### *Daft Trivia*

- 1) Which of Santa's reindeers shares its name with a natural object in space that orbits the sun?
- 2) The most common form of colour blindness is the inability to distinguish between which two colours?
- 3) What was the old name for a Snickers bar before it changed in 1990?
- 4) Which actor played the ninth doctor in Doctor Who?
- 5) What was the name of the tower block where Del Boy and Rodney Trotter lived in 'Only Fools and Horses'?
- 6) Which horror film won the 2024 Golden Raspberry Award for Worst Picture?
- 7) A screwdriver cocktail is orange juice, ice and which spirit?
- 8) Which southern Italian city is usually credited as the birthplace of the pizza?
- 9) Street artist Banksy is originally associated with which British city?
- 10) Which football club plays its home games at Loftus Road?

## Christmas walling word search

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

Here's another time waster but I love solving these. Possibly one to keep the kids or grandchildren busy while you sneak a crafty cocktail in the kitchen. This year mine's a pisco sour (<https://www.liquor.com/recipes/pisco-sour/>)

Donkey Down  
Tyneham  
Sea Spray  
Champagne  
Sherborne stone  
Oak Fair  
Melplash  
Turkey  
Brandy sauce  
Lunky  
Santas Grotto  
Reindeer  
Fairy lights  
Carols

Cheek end  
Wheelbarrow  
Through stone  
Lapland  
Snow  
Foundations  
Muffins  
Stocking  
Nuts  
Roasties  
Sleigh  
Jingle bells  
Sprouts  
Cocktails

