

A24 Dry Stone Walls

<p>Project Summary</p>	<p>Dry stone walls are an iconic part of the heritage of the upland landscape of the Lower Derwent Valley. Many are in a vulnerable condition, which means there is a risk of losing part of the character of the area, along with the historic field patterns they preserve. The project aimed to survey and record sections of wall to assess their condition. It also sought to complete repairs to walls within the project area.</p> <p>The project focused on two study areas around the village of Middleton-by-Wirksworth. Both contained walls built pre-Enclosure Act that preserve mediaeval field patterns. Changes in farming practices mean that many of these walls are now redundant for stock control: The historic map shows that one study area that is now grazed as one enclosure would once have been made up of around 23 small fields.</p>	
<p>Lead Organisation</p>	<p>DerwentWISE Scheme Office</p>	
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Our volunteers were crucial to the success of this project. They braved bitter cold and searing heat to complete the work on a very exposed site.</p> <p>The landowners that allowed us to carry out the work on their land.</p> <p>The Drystone Waller's Association helped with advice on survey techniques. Derbyshire Drystone Wallers Association and Walls for the Future gave practical support on site as well as behind the scenes.</p>	
<p>Location</p>	<p>Middleton By Wirksworth</p>	
<p>Duration of project</p>	<p>April 2017 – March 2019 Yrs: 4-5</p>	
<p>Total cost of project</p> <p>Volunteer time In-kind time</p>	<p>£20,001</p> <p>allocated to A8 habitat restoration project £6,335</p>	
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Original target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 benchmark data report on condition of resource which informs future management and restoration 	<p>Achieved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys completed on two representative sites in the area and data compiled into report to inform future restoration
<p>Headlines/added value</p>	<p>We surveyed 83 individual walls surveyed over 7175 meters. All these walls were examined for condition, stone type, construction method and features & furniture. Although some sections of walls were in a</p>	

	<p>good condition, only two walls were stock proof in their full length. Of the total length of wall surveyed, 84.4% was not stock proof. (The walls we repaired were not included in our survey).</p> <p>Thanks to the efforts of our volunteer team and DerwentWISE's landscape conservation volunteers, we were able to repair 125m of wall, including six 'cheek ends'.</p> <p>In addition to the target outputs we put on one day training in drystone wall surveying, with 12 volunteers trained; two days drystone wall repair course, 12 volunteers trained; 1 cheek end training course, 4 volunteers trained. Making a total of 3 support workshops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of volunteers trained in surveying skills – 27 • No. of volunteer support workshops - 3
<p>Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 An <i>integrated approach</i> to natural and cultural heritage and landscape character conservation • A2 The delivery of <i>significant, long lasting improvements</i> to the condition (and extent where appropriate) of priority sites and features, and hence to the landscape character • A3 Long term improvements to the landscape <i>brought about through better understanding, engagement</i> of land managers and communities, and land use policies and activities <i>based on good information</i> • B2 An <i>increased public understanding</i> of the value of the landscape, and of the need for it to be conserved and restored • C3 <i>Improved access to information</i> about the area and its heritage • D1 The perpetuation of <i>traditional crafts</i> necessary for the maintenance of the landscape • D2 Opportunities for <i>local people to develop skills</i> to enable them to engage with their local landscape and its conservation, and benefit from personal development and • improved employment prospects • D3 <i>Increased knowledge</i>
<p>Lessons Learnt</p>	<p>It was a challenge to fit within the DSWA's condition categories for an individual wall as the condition could vary so much along the length. The volunteers opted to provide approximate percentages of each condition along a wall. Whilst we initially anticipated that volunteers would survey walls independently, on the whole the group preferred to meet up and work together.</p> <p>We also learnt just how bitter cold it can be on a winter morning on a hillside at nearly 1,000ft above sea level.</p>
<p>Any recommendations going forward</p>	<p>We were not able to tackle the derelict walls surrounding the strip fields in the conservation area. A project focusing on this area with sufficient budget for materials (stone) and restoration work would be valuable. Further to that landowners need to be supported to find opportunities to restore the walls within their enclosures. Further survey work could focus on the enclosure act fields on Middleton Moor for comparison.</p>