

# Otley and Yorkshire Dales Branch

## Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain

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The DRY STONE WALLING ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN (DSWA) was founded in 1968. It is an expanding organisation which promotes the craft of dry stone walling, provides opportunities for the public to learn about it, and seeks to ensure that the craft has a thriving future. The DSWA strives to promote high standards of workmanship and operates the only national skills certification scheme from beginner to master craftsman standard. Members of the Association include male and female professional wallers, enthusiastic amateur wallers, stone suppliers, historians, farmers and environmentalists. The DSWA has a national network of more than 20 local branches. The **Otley and Yorkshire Dales Branch**, the largest, is based on Otley, covering the Leeds area and the Yorkshire Dales. It meets at 7:30 pm on the first Tuesday of each month at **Otley Social Working Men's Club, Weston Drive, off Weston Lane, Otley**. New members and visitors are always welcome. The Branch has established a good working relationship with the Chevin Forest Park, and at various sites in the area. A **sub-group of the branch** was established in 2007 at **Leyburn** in the Yorkshire Dales. It holds regular meetings at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of January, April, July and October at **Leyburn Leisure Centre**. Also, it runs training courses, and regular practice sessions. New members and visitors are always welcome at both meetings, which often include talks and slideshows on walling matters. A major walling project, managed by West Yorkshire professional members, was completed at Shibden Park, Halifax. All the elements of a master craftsman's art are shown here, as well as examples of local walling styles and stone features. It is now open to the public and is maintained by this Branch. A second project started here in 2009.



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[DSWA national website](#)  
[Branch website](#)

[www.dswa.org.uk](http://www.dswa.org.uk)  
[www.otleyyorksdalesdswa.org](http://www.otleyyorksdalesdswa.org)

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# Otley and Yorkshire Dales Branch



## Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain



What we do

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# What we do

## Training courses

We run several dry stone walling training courses for beginners each year. Three are held in the Otley area and two in the Leyburn area of North Yorkshire. DSWA qualified instructors lead the courses and are supported by experienced wallers from the Branch. During a course an old wall is stripped down and completely rebuilt by the trainees. This provides an introduction to the basic techniques of dry stone walling. Trainees wishing to develop their walling skills can then attend practice days and special project sessions.

Contact [John McLeod](mailto:john.mcleod10@btinternet.com) on 01423-506821 or [john.mcleod10@btinternet.com](mailto:john.mcleod10@btinternet.com)

## Practice days

These more informal sessions are for people who have completed a beginner's training course and are current DSWA members. They are not free alternatives to such paid-for courses. Practice days are held all year round, at various sites in North and West Yorkshire. Experienced wallers always lead each session. The aim is to give new and improving wallers the opportunity to develop their skills through walling with the different types of stone to be found in Yorkshire. More advanced walling features and techniques are often covered.

[See current Branch programme for more details and persons to contact](#)

## Walling demonstrations

The Branch is regularly asked to give walling demonstrations at local agricultural shows. These include Otley Show, the Young Farmers Show at Pateley Bridge, the Great Yorkshire Show at Harrogate (the second largest agricultural show in the country) and the annual Dales Festival of Food and Drink at Leyburn. These demonstrations help us to promote the Dry Stone Walling Association in general, and our Branch's activities in particular. As a traditional country craft dry stone walling attracts a great deal of interest and appreciation from the general public. Walls are an important part of Yorkshire's landscape and heritage. Many new recruits to our organisation are first attracted at these events.

## Displays and information

We are also asked to provide a display of walling photographs and to provide information about local and national walling activities. This is often in addition to walling demonstrations at events.

## Talks about walling

We are regularly asked to give illustrated talks to local organisations.

## Special Projects

From time to time our amateur and professional members give their time in building or rebuilding dry stone walls, and other stone structures, for worthy causes and organisations. In the past we have built a new sheepfold in the playground of a local primary school, rebuilt walls in a churchyard and have restored sheepfolds and a sheep shelter for the National Trust in Upper Wharfedale. More projects will be completed annually.

# Some limestone walls in the Yorkshire Dales



Stile on Pennine Way, Fountains Fell



Lunky (sheep hole), Park Fell



Two stiles and a gate in a wall on a path up to Ingleborough



Boundary wall, Simon Fell



Wall built in dry valley, Ingleborough



Tree growing in ancient wall, Park Fell

## More projects



Otley Chevin – walling on a steep slope



Demonstration wall – Dales Festival of Food and Drink, Leyburn



Rebuilt National Trust sheep shelter above Buckden, Upper Wharfedale

## Where we do some of our walling

### Otley Chevin, north Leeds

Training courses, practice days and DSWA certification examinations at various levels are held here, some on Leeds City Council's Chevin Forest Park, some on private land. The stone here is coarse gritstone and some riverbed cobbles. One private site on the Chevin is on a steeply sloping hillside, giving the opportunity to learn how to wall on a steep slope.

Contact: [Bill Davis on 0113-2628528](mailto:Bill Davis on 0113-2628528) or [bill1002@yahoo.com](mailto:bill1002@yahoo.com)



### Grass Wood, Grassington, North Yorkshire

Grass Wood is owned and managed by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. For several years our Branch members have provided the skills and labour needed to repair the ancient boundary walls around this wood. Given that the walls are probably two hundred years old, frequent repairs are now necessary. The local stone is an irregularly shaped, chunky sort of limestone and requires different walling techniques to gritstone and sandstone.

Contact: [Patrick Wallace 01535-601636](mailto:Patrick Wallace 01535-601636) or [patrickw@uwclub.net](mailto:patrickw@uwclub.net)



### Lineham Farm, north Leeds

This site is owned by a local charity that provides accommodation and a base for rural activities for disadvantaged children. An adjacent wood contains rough gritstone walls in need of repair. It is now a regular practice site for our Branch. In late 2008 a short wall was built at the entrance to the farm, incorporating a large millstone with a welcome message carved on it. Branch members started in early 2009 to build a sheepfold with wheelchair access at a viewing point on the perimeter of the site.

Contact: [Bill Davis on 0113-2628528](mailto:Bill Davis on 0113-2628528) or [bill1002@yahoo.com](mailto:bill1002@yahoo.com)  
[Richard Kitchen on 0113-2507190](mailto:Richard Kitchen on 0113-2507190) or [richard@rbkitchen.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:richard@rbkitchen.fsnet.co.uk)



## Special Projects completed by the Branch

### Calverley Woods, north Leeds

This wood is maintained by The Friends of Calverley Woods. Their members came to our branch for training in order to maintain walls in this wood. Since then regular walling practice sessions have been held here, with members of both groups sharing the work. The stone is rough gritstone.

Contact: [Richard Kitchen on 0113-2507190 or richard@rbkitchen.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:richard@rbkitchen.fsnet.co.uk)



### Leyburn area, North Yorkshire

Training courses and monthly practice days are held in the area. Also, a project to restore a decrepit wall around a wood near Richmond now owned by the Richmond Outdoor Spaces Association (ROSA) began in 2008. Volunteers from ROSA have been trained by the branch's Leyburn Group and regularly work on this long-term project.



Contact: [John Heslegrave on 01969-624996 or walls@johnheslegrave.co.uk](mailto:walls@johnheslegrave.co.uk)  
or [Les Maxwell on 01969-622828 or leslie154@btinternet.com](mailto:leslie154@btinternet.com)

### National Trust projects: Yorkshire Dales

One of our Branch members had been on working holidays with the National Trust during which dry stone walls were repaired. He suggested to the Trust that volunteers in our Branch could restore dry stone walls and other structures. Subsequently we have restored two decrepit sheepfolds, one in limestone and one in sandstone, and a bield. A bield is a semi-circular wall behind which sheep and cattle can shelter in the frequent Yorkshire Dales bad weather. Annual walling projects are planned for the Trust in Upper Wharfedale.

In late 2008 the Branch began a long-term project to restore an ancient limestone enclosure wall near Malham Tarn. This is now a fortnightly practice day throughout the year (weather permitting, of course – it is situated at 400m!).

Contact: [Wendy Oldham on 01423-780996 or wendy\\_oldham@hotmail.com](mailto:wendy_oldham@hotmail.com)



Sheepfold, above Buckden



Enclosure wall, near Malham Tarn



Rebuilding a derelict sheepfold for the National Trust above Buckden, Wharfedale

Branch members with a demonstration wall built at the Great Yorkshire Show



Building a sheepfold in St Joseph's Primary School, Hunslet, Leeds