

Dave Hannaford

The process of repairing archaeological dry stone walls.

DG We took over the management of this site from English Heritage back in 1993, and we came along with Dave to work out what we could do to put it into good shape, because for many years, since the 1960s people had been coming along here, the walls are drystone walls, and they'd been basically unpicking them and then putting them back randomly, and it was a right old mess, and we came along here and we had photographs of the excavations in 1963, so we were able to work out which bit of the wall had been disturbed and which hadn't, and you [Dave] go on from there.

Well we actually took the walls down, piece by piece until we hit medieval work, and medieval work showed up because it hadn't been moved at all, and the growan which was surrounding the stone was solid, alright, so everything was taken down to the medieval work and then I rebuilt from there up, using the same photographs, and the stone from each wall.

DG So where it had all been higgledy piggledy Dave has built it in the style of the medieval, so you can't actually tell the difference now.

BN So you were using the medieval that you'd gone back to as a template?

As a base, yes. And we actually stopped at the medieval work, we didn't take any medieval work down, if there was a loose stone at medieval level then he was just taken out, repacked and put back in again, and then we used the resin to actually stick them together, which was like a glue to just bind them together to stop them being moved again, we've got two there which are glued together. The line of the wall was random, as the stone, if you like, and it, to start with it completely threw me 'cos I work by eye and the line and the batter of the wall comes into me eye as I'm building, but with this we had to fit the stones and sit them, clean the area, glue them and then pack around them again and work onto the next course. But it's paid off, and then we finish off with turf and then reseed with the heather and whortleberries, anything that's here growing that's seeded, we usually run a handful down on the top layer and seed it out with a moorland mixture of grass and it all binds itself in.

BN So has it worked in terms of preventing the damage?

Yeah, its worked 95% really, its just the wear and tear and people see a wall like this and they must get on top of it, either get on top of it, play with it, rebuild it, or try, and it's just wear and tear so it needs just checking every year, couple of times a year to put it right.

You keep your glue back out of sight, I can see just a couple there, but you actually build stone to stone and just put your ten pence worth, or area, of glue, in between the stones, two or three spots, and its there.

DG And I gave you money every year didn't I?

That's right, and we placed that in the wall

BN Hidden coins?

That's right, each house has got coins in it, different dates on them.