



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

YDSWG Newsletter – January 2008

Welcome to all our old members and those who have joined us this year, many of you from the Training Courses that we ran at Thirsk Auction Mart or Fountains Abbey. It has been most encouraging to see some of you new wallers at our Practice Meets. I do hope that you found them enjoyable. It is also pleasing to see direct entry from the website, an encouraging future trend I hope.

So far this year our excellent Instructors have trained approximately 40 individuals to a pretty high standard. Some of the courses planned by Askham Bryan College did not take place because of shortage of numbers, due to the College over estimating demand. However we have developed a very good working relationship with the College and it is certainly an excellent venue. We have accepted the invitation to again provide the tutors for the College in 2008, on a rather less ambitious programme.

During the summer many members have taken part at our Practice Meets and helped at several shows. Thank you everyone for his or her support. Some of the highlights were as follows:

- The Practice Meet at Sutton Bank was again very well supported, as were those at Rosedale and Kepwick. The latter is a new venue on the western edge of the North Yorkshire Moors and we were faced with the challenge of repairing a moor edge wall on a pretty steep slope. The farmer must have been pleased with the result as he disappeared before the end of the afternoon, only to return with a generous selection of cans to enable us to quench our thirst!
- The attendance at Aysgarth was a little disappointing, in spite of decent weather which was in complete contrast to last year's washout!
- The sponsored build at Healaugh was also rather poorly attended, despite indications earlier in the year of a decent turnout. The Sunday crew consisted of 3 wallers and one new joiner. However 14 metres of big stones were re-assembled into a wall, and we are once again very grateful to Jeremy and Pippa Morrogh-Ryan for another generous donation to Guild funds.

We have also enjoyed sponsorship from Mrs Peacock of Middleham and Ian Woodhead, to whom we offer our grateful thanks.

Mention must be made of the Countryside Live Days at the Great Yorkshire Showground in June. This is a countywide initiative for primary school children to experience the activities and crafts taking place in the countryside, including the rearing of stock and the cultivation of the land. The Guild has supported this event for several years now and the sight of lots of children



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building mini walls is very gratifying. The weather was not very kind but the brilliant idea to purchase some gazebos made it possible to wall under cover.

The Great Yorkshire Show was a successful event as we were able to extend the permanent wall that we are building round the wildlife pond. This year we were able to include features such as a gate, seat and a stile with the result that the wall is becoming a real attraction and receives much positive comment. Grateful thanks to the Honorary Show Director, Bill Cowling, for ensuring we had plenty of stone. Bill is of course our President, which I'm sure helps! We also filled a training course of 8 places as a result of the splendid efforts by those 'manning' the stand over the three days of the event.

The Masham Steam Rally just went ahead in spite of very wet weather the week before. We completed the circular wall around a young oak tree, incorporating a gated arch to provide access to the enclosed area. The wall now looks most impressive and is a credit to all those who have helped build it over the years, both at the Rally and on training weekends. The show ground got very muddy and churned up as the weekend progressed and we were very lucky to be able to extract our caravan before the exits became passable only with the assistance of tractors and 4 wheel drive machinery.

The competition, held this year at Stay Farm Kepwick and lubricated with more cans of beer during the afternoon, was much better attended than in the past, with the welcome appearance of some new faces on the day. David Leedale showed us the way with a well-deserved 1st prize for a top class section; Dave Williams, a new member from the Fountains Abbey course held in early September, scooped the Amateur trophy. The full results were:

Open 1st David Leedale, 2nd John Pridmore, 3rd Michael Booth.
Amateur 1st Dave Williams, 2nd Andy Summers, 3rd Bryn Gifford.

Well done one and all.

Thank you to Judge Clifford Bailey and Ian Woodhead for sponsorship and lubricants.

At the AGM last year we collected £24 from the raffle towards Children in Need, thank you very much.

Congratulations to those of you qualifying this year for our test certificates, well done.

I am hoping you will give support towards the changes we are proposing for Guild qualifications; the launch of the website has inevitably exposed us, and our activities, to a much wider and potentially critical audience and we believe we must adjust accordingly. The basic test remains unchanged, but we have waived the requirement for examination by Master Wallers to help maintain



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their rest at practice weekends, using seasoned and experienced wallers to do that assessment instead.

If you have some interesting pictures or information on walls, or perhaps come across examples of dreadful walling, why not send them in for posting on the website. Visit our website at www.ydswg.co.uk and visit the "Contact Us" section. Who knows, you might just win "Worst Wall of the Year!"

We hope you will find the new venue and social aspects of the Annual General Meeting a refreshing change; there is usually little enough scope for chat and mingling at practice meets and other gatherings.

Michael Booth
Chairman