



Autumn Newsletter 2012



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- Useful hints and tips
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- Dry Stone Walling in Ontario, Canada



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Cover photography credits

Front cover: Seat at the Great Yorkshire Show

Back cover: Guild students on a training course at Fountains Abbey

Welcome

Dear Member,

I hope you like our new look Journal which we will send out annually towards the end of each season. The content will be an on-going work in progress so if you have any interesting articles or photographs please send them into Sarah or John and we will include them in our next edition. We can also add them to the website with your permission.

We continue to develop our website with the help of Euan Raffel. You will notice some new links in the menu giving details of the Annual Competition and the various accreditations which the Guild offers.

For those of you who are up with technology (generally those



younger than me) we now have a Facebook page which can be accessed on www.facebook.com/ydswg. Here you will see updates and reminders about upcoming events along with pictures from Guild activities. You can also follow a link on the Facebook page to join the Facebook group which will mean you get reminders sent to your email address.

I do hope you will enjoy this new format.

John Pridmore
Chairman

Chairman's Chat

Another season of Guild activity is drawing to a close so here is a review of what we have been up to this year.

Firstly the formal stuff. The Guild AGM takes place on Saturday November 10th at Thirsk Town Hall. Your attendance and input into this meeting would be greatly appreciated, as it allows an opportunity to air and discuss any new ideas or ways the Guild can further improve how it functions. We are always open to suggestions and great ideas! Refreshments will be provided after the event (please complete the enclosed food order slip and return to the Secretary) which is a great time to catch up with other wallers on what they have been up to all summer. New members are most welcome to come along and seek advice or help from more experienced wallers who will be attending.

We would still like to fill the position of course co-ordinator, so if anyone would like to take a more active role within The Guild and feel they could take on this role please contact John or Sarah (contactus@ydswg.co.uk or 01423 560948) for more information. Woody would also like to hand over the Treasurer's role over the next year so again if you feel like taking this on please let us know. Whoever comes forward will get support and training until they are fully up and running.

May I wish a warm welcome to all the new members who have joined us this year either as direct entry or from one of our many courses. I do hope you will continue your membership into 2013 and take the opportunity to attend some of the events we have planned for next year.

Membership is a little down on last year so your continued support is very much appreciated.

We reduced the number of Guild courses this year down to six, however they have all been well attended and again positive feedback has been received from all those taking part. We trialled two new venues this year; a permanent site at Fountains Abbey using newly quarried sandstone and The Bivouac, Ilton near Masham. Many thanks to Steve Hardwick for allowing us to hold the course here, it was well received and a great success. The continuation of the courses beyond early next year is dependant of filling the post of course co-ordinator as mentioned above so please do come forward if you can help.

Demonstrations at shows again formed a big part of the Guild's activity through the year. We started the year with a new event at Bishop Burton College near Beverley. Whilst not in 'walling country' there was a good amount of interest shown (and the weather was beautiful as you can see from the picture). This was closely followed by Duncombe Park and Countryside Days at the YAS Showground, both of which were well attended. Unfortunately the Great Yorkshire Show was a high profile victim of the weather. A hardy squad turned up on the Tuesday and did their best in awful conditions but the show finally had to give in to the weather and postpone the remaining 2 days. This is normally one of our best events to promote the Guild and as such may have had a small impact on the number of members and courses sold this year.



Masham Show could potentially have been another victim of the weather but luckily enough it dried up just in time. It was another enjoyable weekend and a nice section of limestone wall was added to the previous years. The Guild is also due at the Countryside Live event later in October. Pictures of these events can be seen on our website ydswwg.co.uk so please go and have a look if you haven't seen them already.



The walling competition took place at the end of September and we managed to stage both the open and amateur classes this year. In contrast to the previous year this one was rather cool and blustery but most importantly, dry. Many thanks again to Keith Ledger who kindly agreed to judge the competition, to Sarah for providing

sausage butties and to Shirley (mother in law) for the cakes. I would also like to thank the Ryder family for their kind sponsorship of the event. The final result was as follows:

OPEN	AMATEUR
1 st John Pridmore	1 st Colin Short
2 nd Johnny Clasper	2 nd Alex Macey
3 rd Dave Edwards	

If you feel like giving this a go next year the details can be found on the website or obtained from the Secretary. You will have an enjoyable day and always come away learning something new. A tip that I picked up was to always check the wall on a regular basis, as stones beneath the course you are building can move and leave gaps.

The Guild held several practice meets throughout the year starting with an unplanned event in Swaledale. We helped out a local farmer affected by the floods, repairing a field shelter wall near the banks of the river Swale. This was followed by our first practice meet at Carperby in the beautiful backdrop of West Bolton Castle. The first of our two sponsored events came next at Bingley. Many thanks to Meggan Jefferies and her family for their kind support and hospitality. The next practice meet was at a new venue near Masham. The Bivouac is a new venture in which one of our members, Steve Hardwick, is involved.

There was a good turnout and we were well looked after by Steve with excellent bacon butties, teas and coffees. The work squad are pictured opposite. A very nice job the two Steves made of the curved wall end. We look forward to going back in 2013.



The end of June saw our first visit to Long Liberty Farm near Harrogate, where fresh from one of the Guilds training courses Phil and Matt (pictured opposite) came to try out their newly acquired skills. Both showed that they had learnt well from the courses and helped construct a good section of wall.

We returned to Grinton late in July to complete the job we started in March. Many thanks to Paul Brown for his kind donation to the Guild. Our efforts were also recognised by Earl Peel who wrote to the Guild expressing his thanks for our efforts. The letter can be viewed on the website.



The second sponsored build was held at West Bolton Farm, Carperby and again many thanks to all those attending for the weekend. As you can see we were blessed with the weather. Thanks again to our hosts Mr & Mrs Langhorn for their generous support and hospitality. The post build teas were excellent and

very much appreciated by all.

We met for the second time at Bingley in late September and although the morning started out cool we ended up having a lovely day. Mike Tomlinson and his son came along following their earlier course at Fountains Abbey. The different stone gave them a good challenge but with some expert guidance from Michael and John they had a good day. Thanks again to Meggan for her hospitality. As I write we have still to demonstrate at the Countryside Live show on 20th & 21st October and have one more visit to Bingley planned for our last practice meet which is on Sunday 4th November.

Practice meets are a great opportunity to come along, meet new people and improve your skills, working with different stone under the guidance of experienced wallers. We can also hold certification tests at practice meets where members can take their basic and advanced tests. For further details check out the website or contact the Secretary.

Finally well done to members Johnny Clasper for winning Gold Awards at both the Spring and Autumn Flowers Shows and to Keith Ledger for a Gold Award also at the Spring Flower Show. Congratulations to Chris Morgan for passing his Basic Certification in the summer.

John Pridmore
Chairman

Walling Hints and Tips

Here are a few hints and tips sent in by our members. Hopefully you will find them useful and informative.

- ◆ Tighten loose hammer heads by hitting the end of the wooden shaft hard with another hammer. Hold it upside down by the handle to do so and it will 'walk' back into position.
- ◆ Another way to tighten the head is to soak the hammer head in water however you need to remember to do this the night before.
- ◆ A dry stone wall is like a man. It doesn't stand up unless it's belly is full.
- ◆ Put one over two and don't forget the through.
- ◆ When packing over fill the middle as you will always need to pinch wedges on the next course and this stops you pulling out the middle from the course below.
- ◆ Use elastic bungees on the end of your lines to stop the line snapping should you trip on it.
- ◆ To secure your A frame get a long plank, hammer a nail partly into one end then hook the nail over the top of your frame and weight the plank down with a stone.
- ◆ When gapping always make sure you have enough coping stones before starting to build. Lay them out & measure against your gap.



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Feature - Yorkshire Dales National Park Volunteers

Established in 1954, the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP) straddles the Pennines in Northern England in the counties of North Yorkshire and Cumbria. Covering an area of 680 square miles, the Park boasts 906 miles of public pathways, 389 miles of bridleways (foot, horse and cycle users) and 23 miles of byways open to traffic.

Amongst other duties, the Park Authority is the delegated highway authority for public rights of way, responsible for their repairs and maintenance and surface condition, ensuring access at all times. The Park employs a small team of Area Rangers and Access Rangers, who in turn are reliant on Park Volunteers who give up their time freely to undertake an enormous variety of tasks in and around the National Park, assisting in the smooth running of the Park for the



enjoyment of more than two million visitors every year.

The two hundred volunteers collectively contributed six thousand days' work in 2011, and the Authority are currently recruiting more volunteers to be trained up to work alongside existing volunteers in the Park's four Area Teams. A minimum of fifteen days' work is expected from each volunteer per year, there is no age restriction, but basic physical fitness is expected from candidates.

Volunteers are free to choose the type of activities they wish to be involved in following suitable training; a vast range of tasks being available, e.g. footpath and bridge surveys, regular inspections of buildings at risk, peregrine watching and dormice surveys, leading guided walks, manning Information Centres, meeting and greeting visitors, maintenance and conservation work parties etc.

Guild Committee members Dick Laidler and Dave Purvis have been Park Volunteers for almost ten years and as part of the North East Team, work most Thursdays in the Park with other volunteers and members of the Ragged Robins Wildlife Group (based in Richmond). Over the years, they have built up an enormous skills base following the large variety of conservation tasks they have undertaken over the years.

Following the heavy rain and snow melt at the end of 2011, rivers burst their banks in several areas of the Park causing widespread damage, particularly

devastating in Swaledale when large sections of the popular Coast to Coast route was washed out, and traditional riverside hay meadows flooded and were covered in a blanket of silt and debris. Working in conjunction with the



farmers, volunteers worked hard in the ensuing months to carry out temporary repairs to open up the public footpaths, then to effect permanent repairs to the walls and embankments. This allowed the farmers to clear the meadowland and reseed the area from sweepings from the floor of the hay barn so that traditional local grasses can grow back, making a valuable

contribution to the ecology of the area.

Asked why do we give up so much of our time to these types of tasks, it is perhaps that we get a “buzz” from working in such a tremendous part of the country, making tangible efforts to preserve the well-being of the Yorkshire Dales which we have enjoyed so much over the years.

There are several reports of some of the walling tasks we have undertaken over recent years in the Gallery section of the web site.

Dave Purvis

Dry Stone Walling Takes a Huge Step Forward in Ontario, Canada

On the weekend of 28-30 September 2012 about 65 ‘walling enthusiasts’ of varying abilities gathered at the Ground Effects Landscaping site in West Grey (near Hanover), Ontario, to continue the work of preparing the area surrounding the dry stone stable that had been constructed over the past couple of weeks. The work involved a number of walls with embedded features such as curves, corners and gateways. The entire process was overseen by senior crafts persons of the Dry Stone Walling Association (DSWA) of Great Britain. The Master and Advanced level Craftsmen from the DWSA were:

Andrew Loudon, Bill Noble, Philip Dolphin, Stephen Harrison, Tracey Blackwell, Jared Flynn, and from the USA, Chuck Eblacker

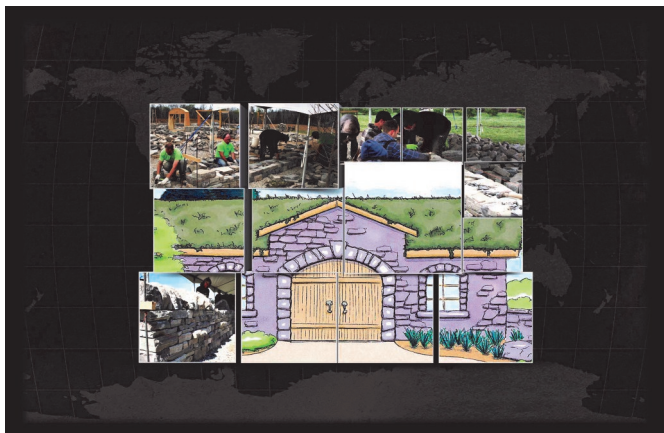
Raising the roof for the dry stone stable was the main event for the weekend.

The environmentally friendly 'living' roof was put in place at 3.00 PM on Sunday afternoon.

Considering the relatively unknown practice of dry stone walling in Canada, this was a significant event as it raised the profile of the craft with the construction of a 'one of a kind' building and provided the opportunity to work on a number of walls and features surrounding the stable. This fosters continuing quality walling opportunities for future work on the structures surrounding the stable.

The weekend was structured as a dry stone wall festival and with the site open to the public it was very well attended. It was not unusual to be on the rock pile looking for that 'perfect' stone when you would be asked, by members of the public, questions about the craft. The public interaction proved a worthwhile experience and allowed the wallers to explain why they do this thing called 'dry stone' construction.

On the Friday evening, time was allocated for the craftsmen from the DSWA to introduce themselves and provide a bit of background on their careers in walling. Being from Yorkshire I got to laugh at the jokes that no one else seemed to understand. However, it was a good start to the weekend and



certainly allowed people to put faces to names.

Saturday was a work day and all of the surrounding walls reached at least the point of laying "troughs" by the close of the first day. The DWSA folks completed the remaining work on the stable to ensure

all would be ready for the Sunday afternoon. Saturday wound up with a 'Rib Fest' supper and a dance which lasted well into the night.

Sunday proved to be a bit of a challenge to get the work on the surrounding walls completed before the roof ceremony in the afternoon, however we did achieve 'toppers' and coping stones on some sections of the walls. I had the opportunity to work on the section of wall supervised by Tracey Blackwell, from DWSA and I found her a great help in facilitating a good quality wall section.

The complete set of photos of the work and weekend are posted on the

'Stonewurx Facebook' page, which can be linked through their website www.stonewurx.ca

There was a feeling amongst the participants that this could become a valuable annual event and if it could be arranged it would be a significant event for the 'wallers' in Ontario, Canada and the northern states of the US.

In conclusion this was a very successful weekend capping off a significant amount of skilled work from the master craftsmen to construct a truly one of a kind dry stone building surrounded by walls and other features. This could be the start of a great walling opportunity in Ontario Canada. All thanks to Ground Effects Garden Centre (www.tinyurl.com/ydswg1) for sponsoring and supporting this effort they are true supporters of the craft.

Cheers,
'That bloke from Canada'
John Redican

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Guild Information

President	Bill Cowling
Chairman	John Pridmore
Secretary	Sarah Pridmore
Treasurer	Brian Wood
Course Coordinator	Brian Wood (TBA for 2013)
Committee	Dick Laidler
	Dave Purvis
	Dave Leedale
	Dave Edwards
	Chris Morgan
	Dennis Garbutt
	Anna Bryer

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