



Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting – 14 November 2015

Present

Sarah Pridmore, John Pridmore, Brian Wood, Les Maxwell, Dave Purvis, Graham Brown, Bill Cowling, Dennis Garbutt, Michael Booth, Paula Gittings, Dick Laidler, Phil Grey, Ray Ellis, Hazel Purvis.

Apologies

Anna Bryer, Laurence Tucker, Dave Leedale Thanks to everyone for attending this year's AGM.

Welcome to Bill Cowling

Bill congratulated the Guild on another successful year and was happy to stay on as President as long as the Guild still wanted him to stay. Everyone agreed that they would like Bill to stay on as President.

Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

Read by John Pridmore proposed by Brian Wood seconded by Dick Laidler

Matters arising

None

Chairman's report

Another year has flown by and here we are again at the AGM. It's been a busy year again so here is the review of what's been going on.

I would like to thank Bill for all his support during his tenure as show director. We undertook some interesting projects the pinnacle of which was the Crimple Valley Oracle which is a great feature down at the brown gate.

Sarah will cover off membership in her report and I will let Les cover off all things about courses.

On this year's activity I will kick off with the demonstrations at shows which are a great way for the Guild to promote itself and the craft. Our first event was the Duncombe Park show and with the usual load of rubble that the team managed to

transform into a good looking wall and also generated some good interest The Countryside Days educational event was then followed by The Great Yorkshire Show. This year was a low key build back at the Brown Gate where we repaired the wall round the pond that had suffered some vandalism and also built some low level bench seats using up some old flags that the facilities yard had left over. On the Wednesday, a small team headed off to the Presidents Lawn to build a small feature arch for the One Show which was being broadcast live from the Showground. Messers Ledger, Clasper, Purvis and I (with Sarah and Molly providing a bit of walling glamour) set about building an arch in a small length of wall adjacent to the existing Kissing Seat we had built previously. After getting miked up rehearsals were started and Matt Baker came over to take the interview. I did mention that we were on the kissing seat and that he was not my type and that I though Alex would be much better however if that had happened I might have risked a stone in the back of my head from Sarah who was nearby. I hope some of you saw the feature on the show, unfortunately the live version was curtailed from the rehearsals because of over-running however I think we gained some good publicity and the biggest relief of all was that the arch stood up. Back to Ripley show in August on a much better day than last year again generating some good interest and course enquiries. The last show was countryside Live a couple of weeks ago which turned out to be a good weekend with plenty of interest in our stand and hopefully some course sales for next year.

The walling competition finally gained sufficient entries for both the amateur and open classes to go ahead. Congratulations to Araya Shemondi for winning the amateur and Johnny Clasper for winning the open

The mainstay of the Guilds activities are the practice meets held throughout the year. We got things going at Carperby on a decent spring day and then moved south and west to Cropper Fold Farm where a good squad repaired a section a little further down the wall we have been renovating. The next event was the first of our visits to The Bivouac at Ilton. A really good turnout meant that we could repair a large section of the wall to the right of the entrance (which was finished off during the course the following month) We followed that by visiting Long Liberty Farm again where a small squad of 3 extended the wall a little further (we are getting nearer the end of the length every year) and Hugh Woolner also passed his basic examination. A good session will see us completing the wall next year

The next 2 visits were back to Garbutt Farm at Sutton bank where we continued to extend the limestone wall along the drive. This site offers a great opportunity to

work with a different type of stone and it's also nice not to have to pick up the hammer much during the day. Early September signalled our annual pilgrimage up to West Bolton Farm near Carperby for our sponsored weekend. A good turnout resulted in several sections of derelict wall being repaired

In early October, we held a new event. After an employee of Axa had been on a course with us she enquired if we could possibly hold some form of sponsored training event for Axa employees in aid of Alzheimer's research. 5 instructors looked after about 10 volunteers up on Long Liberty Farm giving instruction and coaching on a lovely autumn day. Everyone really enjoyed themselves and over £1000 was raised for a good cause. Thanks to all who helped out & to Sarah for Sausage butties and cakes

Late October saw us back at The Bivouac on a decent autumn day where a squad of 4 repaired some more derelict wall. On Sunday 1st November, we wrapped up our activity back at Cropper Fold Farm again on a glorious autumn day. It was blue skies and shirt sleeve weather which was a lovely end to the season

JP also mentioned the Cordings wall build inside the Harrogate store. More details will go in next year's newsletter

Many thanks to all of you who have helped out throughout the year, especially to Sarah, Paula and Les and also to our sponsors for their kind contributions

Secretary's Report

Welcome again to everyone and thanks for coming along. Paula will report on the financial situation and Les will give an update on the courses and I update you on the other bits.

Membership is up on last year at this point, currently standing at 178 against 161 last year which is an increase of 17 building on; last year's increase of 6 members. This is made up of 14 honorary, 10 life and 154 paid members. In total 60 existing members did not renew which is down 1 from last year, however we did gain 63 new members through our courses & taster sessions run this year. We do hope to retain more members but this always seems to be a challenge so any suggestions to improve retention are always welcome.

The sponsored builds were well attended this year and we raised over £250 from all those held. Once again thank you to Mr & Mrs Langhorne, Meggan Jefferies, The

Ryder Family and Sallie & Julian Lloyd for their kindness and generosity in supporting us on these events. These events form a vital source of funding for the Guild and they will be held again next year so we hope you can come along and support us.

As ever the Guild website is the home of all our information and continues to grow in content every year with new pictures and reports being added. Many thanks to Euan for his efforts in keeping this up to date and relevant. We are always open to the suggestions from members on how to improve the web site so do please bring them to our attention. We also have a Facebook page which growing and complimenting the website. It's a great way of pushing information to members (and those interesting in walling) especially reminders about events. If you haven't already signed onto it, please do as you can also click a link to join the Facebook group where you will receive updates and reminders straight into your email account. The popularity of the page is increasing and we now have a total of 287 likes on the page from all parts of the world. You can access Facebook through the website or by searching on Facebook for YDSWG

John has covered most of the activity of the year in his report so I would just like to re iterate his thanks to all those who have attended shows and events on behalf of the guild. The days do prove beneficial to the guild in promoting our craft, courses and sometime gaining work for our full time walling members. The venues and events next year will be publicised in the spring newsletter but should be on the website much sooner. Look out for a feature build on the old golf course next to the Great Yorkshire Showground

I hope you all enjoyed the booklet newsletter which is now a regular feature of the Guild and a nice way of communicating to all our members. Thanks again to Euan for sorting the production along with all those who contributed to the articles. Also thanks to all those who have advertised in the booklet which has helped make the production commercially viable. If you ever have anything of interest please let us know and we can maybe feature it in next year's issue

Thanks to all the committee members for their contributions and especially to Dave P for organising the show activity so well and also to Les and Paula for the sterling work they have done over the year.

Treasurer's Report

2015 has proved to be a good year for the Guild. Membership has increased and our courses have done better than ever thus boosting Guild funds. The big item you will see on there is the income generated by our courses, a total of £8217 if you include all the gift vouchers purchased so even paying an increased instructors fee of 150 per day the courses were still very profitable and a great and vital source of income to the Guild.

This FY also had the Oracle income due to the timings of the payment. Also we have not asked for as much from our sponsored builds due to the financial strength of the Guild which is why the donations are only 350. This is to try and restrict our profit so we don't attract the attentions of the tax man.

On the expenditure, we have invested in some new tools for the courses and also a new sturdy gazebo for events. There was also the competition which was held this year which was not in last year's accounts plus we are paying committee members mileage expenses to cover the cost of them attending meetings

When we tot everything up we made a net profit of 932.51 taking the Guild funds up to a healthy £5812 from £4879 last year

Course Coordinator's Report

Following a disappointing year in 2013 i.e only 28 people attending our weekend Beginners' Dry Stone Walling Training Courses, a review of our course fee was carried out at the end of 2013. This resulted in the course fee being reduced from £116 to £99 in order to compete with courses being offered by other dry stone walling groups and therefore attract more trainees.

This reduction in costs had the desired effect and as a result 56 people attended courses in 2014. i.e an increase of a 100%.

As it stands, our fees at @£99 are a bit higher than other groups but we offer smaller training groups with a maximum ratio of 1:5 i.e one instructor to five trainees. This leads to maximum personal tuition. Therefore this represents excellent value for money when you consider other groups run courses with just one trainer and numerous trainees. In my opinion this is poor value for money. In 2015 we are looking for an increase in beginner numbers on training courses as we now have two new course venues. One at Cold Kirby at the top of Sutton Bank and another at Coverdale near Leyburn.

Election of Officers

There was an application made to accept Graham Brown onto the committee. This was proposed by John Pridmore and seconded by Sarah Pridmore. The floor voted unanimously to accept Graham onto the committee. The committee is now made up as follows:

Chairman - John Pridmore

Secretary - Sarah Pridmore

Treasurer - Paula Gittings

Assistant Secretary - Anna Bryer

Course Coordinator - Les Maxwell

Committee - Dave Purvis, Dick Laidler, Dave Leedale, Chris Morgan, Dennis Garbutt, Graham Brown

AOB

JP to speak to Chris Morgan about stepping down from the committee.

Dave Purvis thanked Bill for his support at the GYS then talked about the Crimplehenge proposed build for 12th & 13th March 2016 with potentially an extra day midweek.

Dick Laidler requested some Guild postcards to put out in his local library

John mentioned that Dick, Woody and himself attended the DSWA Gearstones build earlier in the year

Meeting closed at 3.47pm