



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

YDSWG Newsletter – Spring 2010

Welcome to 2010 with the YDSWG!

To those of you who don't know me let me introduce myself. I am John Pridmore and I was elected as the new Chairman when Michael Booth stepped down at the AGM last November. I have been with the Guild since 2004 and have qualified as both Master Waller and Instructor. I would like to thank Michael for his excellent leadership and hard work over the past 7 years in helping to move the Guild forward as an organisation. He has done a great job for the Guild and I hope I can continue to build on the improvements he has made.

Spring is slowly starting to arrive after a very long and hard winter. Those of you who enjoy a bit of winter walling will have had few opportunities since mid-December, with the stone being either covered in snow or 'welded' to the ground with hard frost. Let's hope that a hard winter heralds a glorious summer.

A warm welcome to all our new members who joined us in 2009. I hope that you are still enthusiastic after the winter period and keen to get out and improve your walling skills. There are numerous events planned for the year which are all highlighted on the website ydswg.co.uk, which include practice meets, shows, sponsored builds and our competition. This year we have tried to arrange the practice meets in an effort to cover the geographical spread of our membership. The first meet will be at West Bolton Farm near Carperby on 10th April. We hope you will be able to attend one or more of the practice meets throughout the year and if you are struggling to make it for a full day why not come along for a morning or afternoon. The other meets are as follows:

22 nd May 2010	Opposite Village Hall, Kewick
27 th June 2010	Skyeside, Cowling (South of Skipton)
3 rd July 2010	Hollin Bower Farm, Chopgate (NY Moors)
8 th August 2010	Long Liberty Farm, Pennypot Lane (Opposite Harrogate wind farm)
4 th & 5 th Sept 2010	Sponsored Build West Bolton Farm, Carperby

There is no charge and the events offer a great opportunity to brush up your skills, ask advice from experienced wallers and use different types of stone in different environments. The atmosphere is very friendly and open to all, including any non-members who may want to try out Dry Stone Walling as a 'taster'. A reminder will be emailed out prior to each event so if your email details have changed recently please let us know so you don't miss out.



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The sponsored build is at West Bolton Farm again this year. Many thanks to all those who attended last year when we repaired four different sections of wall on the farm. The Guild is again most appreciative of Mr and Mrs Langhorne for their generous sponsorship, and the splendid teas laid on afterwards. Again if you are able to attend, even for a few hours, it is appreciated and helps provide vital funds to keep the Guild operating.

We also attend several agricultural shows throughout the year, the first being at Duncombe Park, Helmsley on Monday 31st May. We have again been asked to build a permanent feature at the Great Yorkshire Show this year, (the final design has still to be agreed). At Masham Steam Rally we will be adding to the new section of wall started last year using quarried stone which offers a great opportunity to work with new stone. This is also a permanent feature that will remain once the show has finished.

These shows are open to all members although the complimentary ticket places on our stand are limited. If you are interested in attending and demonstrating the craft of walling please lodge your interest with one of the committee (all you will need is a Guild polo shirt which can be purchased from Foxstitch, Unit A, Lumley Close, Thirsk Industrial Park, Thirsk, YO7 3TD Tel 01845 526297).

Just a quick reminder that subscriptions are now due, they do form a vital part of the Guild income. You can now do this online at epayments.ydswg.co.uk. Membership is still only £7.50 which is great value and I certainly don't know many organisations that have such a small annual membership fee.

The AGM was held in November 2009 where the only significant change to the committee was at the position of chair. The committee was elected as follows

Chair	John Pridmore
Company Secretary	Judith Wood
Treasurer and Secretary	Brian Wood (Woody)
Committee Secretary	Anna Bryer
Committee	Clifford Bailey Dave Purvis Dennis Garbutt Dick Laidler Dave Leedale Michael Booth

It was reported that the Guild continued to be financially sound; the main source of income now coming from our training courses, supported by subscriptions and the Sponsored build.



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Woody has indicated that this will be his last year as Secretary and I would like to thank him for the excellent job he has done and continues to do for the Guild. Whilst Woody is stepping down he will still deal with some parts of the role going forwards thus reducing the workload for the new Secretary. We would like to be able to hand over the duties at the next AGM in November so would a volunteer come forward please. Please contact either Woody or myself to learn more.

Our training courses go from strength to strength every year and there are more planned throughout this year. Once again the feedback from all those who attended last year was positive and full of praise so thanks again to all the instructors for doing a great job. The instructors' evaluation day this year will once again be at Masham on Saturday 27th March, where we will review the year ahead and look at ways of improving the courses we deliver.

Course information is available on the Guild website, now separated into its own microsite at **courses.ydswg.co.uk**, but the first three courses this year will be a little different. These are being held at Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre where the students, under the guidance of our instructors, will be building an enclosure wall around a new outdoor plant sales area. This is an exciting and challenging project using newly quarried stone, with the end result being something that will be appreciated and admired for many years to come. It will also be a great advertisement for the Guild.

Our website has grown and developed into a great tool to promote the Guild and the craft of Dry Stone Walling. Many thanks must go to the site designer Euan Raffel for a very professional job. Thanks are also due to Dave Purvis for a constant supply of new material to keep the site fresh and up to date. Along with pictures from our meets and shows we have added features such as seasonal walls and disasters so if you have any pictures that you think might be suitable for this or any other category please send them in. Also if you have any suggestions for improving the site please submit them for consideration.

Once again thank you for your continued membership and support and we look forward to hopefully seeing you sometime during the year.

John Pridmore
March 2010



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YDSWG Newsletter – Spring 2010 Some notes from the Secretary 2010

At the AGM 2009 I announced my intention to stand down as Secretary at the end of this year. John has already mentioned this in his newsletter; after taking up the job on a temporary basis in 2004 I feel it is now high time for another pair of hands on the wheel.

With nearly 200 members in the Guild there must be a volunteer to take on this uniquely rewarding task; I will help as much as necessary to get you launched and operational. So please get in touch.

Car sharing scheme

As last year, Anna Bryer has again kindly offered to put those of you living in nearby areas in touch with each other to reduce the travel costs to our various functions. She can be reached by email paul@anna34wanadoo.co.uk or phone 07949 822926

Volunteers

1. The Guild gets involved in a number of school and educational events organised by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society in an effort to keep our craft alive in young minds. This year we are able to offer expenses at 40p per mile for those willing to give a little of their time to these worthy causes. It is always a lot of fun and very rewarding so do come along. Please get in touch with me directly to make the arrangements.
2. We have offered to demonstrate dry stone walling at Askham Bryan College York during their open day on Sunday 20th June. 2 volunteers living nearby would be very welcome; the aim here is to generate some enthusiasm amongst the visitors that day and promote the Askham Bryan training course at Thirsk in July. Their record at filling the courses we run on their behalf is poor with many cancellations in the past. Again, please get in touch directly with me.

Skills Tests

The Guild has three levels of skills tests for members wishing to have their abilities assessed by wallers with long experience. **All are by pre-arrangement only.**

The **Basic** test can often be taken at one of the Practice meets; it involves pulling down a 2 metre section of wall and rebuilding it under exam conditions to a specified quality level within 7 hours. Successful candidates are issued with a certificate together with a verbal assessment of their work, drawing attention to areas of improvement or any weakness in technique.

The **Advanced** test is to a more stringent quality level; the build includes the construction of a wall head and the candidate is expected to be able to answer question aimed at exploring his/her understanding of the history and knowledge of the craft. Examination will be by a Master waller and there is a fee for the test.

The **Master** test involves the assessment by two Master wallers of past work by the candidate as well as an observed build with a special feature of choice; it is



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particularly directed at assessing wallers aiming at the Professional level to ensure a satisfactory and consistent standard of workmanship is being used in the industry. A fee applies, and the Basic qualification is a pre-requisite.

Membership renewal

It helps the Guild a great deal if you renew your membership with a standing order by making a big difference to the cash flow at a critical time. We urge you to use it.

Have a good year walling.

Kind regards,
Woody