



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

YDSWG Newsletter – Spring 2009

Welcome to 2009 with the YDSWG! In spite of the current lousy economic situation and recent heavy snowfalls let us look forward to spring and a bit of sunshine.

As is usual, I welcome all those of you who have joined us during the past year; many of you as a result of successfully completing one of our training courses. We do hope that your enthusiasm has survived the winter months and that you are inspired to renew your membership and participate in some of this year's activities.

Please find on our website the **Events Programme for 2009**. If you recently received a reminder that your Annual Subscription is due, why not renew the easy way through ePayments? Go to epayments.ydswg.co.uk and follow the links.

Our AGM in November 2008 appeared to be successful. The following Committee was elected:

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

We are delighted that Dick Laidler and Dave Leedale agreed to join the Committee. They are both well known and respected wallers and we are very pleased that they have been prepared to come on board and strengthen your Committee. It is important that we have new blood coming through to replace those of us who are contemplating stepping down! It was reported that our membership stood at 170 and that we are in a healthy financial position. We finished the afternoon with some very good fish and chips!

Those present will remember that I thanked the Committee for their sterling work over the past twelve months. In particular we thanked Woody for his dedication and hard work as both Treasurer and Secretary. He is truly the engine room of the Guild and its increasing success, activity and exposure are in the main due to him.



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During the past year our excellent instructors trained over 50 individuals to the usual high standard at Thirsk Auction Mart, Fountains Abbey and Far Laithe Farm near Keighley.

We started 2009 by having another Instructors Evaluation Day at Masham on Saturday 28th March to discuss how things went last year, enrol new instructors and strengthen any aspects of the training procedures where we feel have any weaknesses.

If you are interested in becoming one of our Instructors then can I suggest that in the first instance you get in touch with either Woody or myself, who will tell you what is involved and what the Guild's requirements of becoming an Instructor are.

We are running 10 Courses this year; they include courses for Askham Bryan College and FWAG. If you visit our brilliant and informative web site – www.ydswg.co.uk - you will see that we have gift tokens for Training Courses which make excellent and increasingly popular gifts for birthdays and the like.

You will note from the programme we will not be appearing at the Pickering Game and Country fair this year; it has been disappointing in terms of membership intake and course bookings. This year we have 7 shows and educational events, there are 6 Practice Meets and 2 sponsored builds. Your Committee has again tried to create a balance between these events and spread them geographically and through the calendar.

We start the year properly on the weekend of April 4th and 5th at Castle Bolton, near Carperby in Wensleydale, where we are involved with a Sponsored Build organised by Committee member Dick Laidler, with the proceeds going to the Great North Air Ambulance. The background to this is that last year Dick, a volunteer with the Dales National Park, had a very nasty accident whilst working on their behalf when he was hit by a quad bike and had to be airlifted by the Air Ambulance to hospital. Fortunately it turned out that Dick was not too seriously injured. Dick is keen to financially support the work of the Air Ambulance as a 'thank you' by organising this Sponsored Build and I would ask as many members as possible to support his excellent initiative.

With regard to our other normal activities, if you are interested in supporting the Guild and having a good day out we would love to see you at any of the Practice Meets or Shows.

Practice Meets present an excellent opportunity for you to enjoy walling in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. They enable you to compare and hone your techniques and skills with other members who may be either more or less skilled than yourself. It is also an opportunity to work with different types of stone which you might find to be a useful challenge.



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Shows are always (well nearly always unless the weather is awful!) good fun and do help promote the craft of dry stone walling. They enable one to meet and talk to interesting people and there is always plenty of time to go round the show or spend time with your family. If you do join us then **please** can I ask you to wear a Guild shirt as doing this does make our appearance look more professional and businesslike? We also have a new improved logo for the badge!

These garments can be obtained from:
Foxstitch, Batemans Yard, Thirsk, YO7 1HD
Tel 01845 526297
Email mike@foxstitch.freeserve.co.uk
Web <http://www.bluefriar.com>

The Sponsored Build in September is another important event in the Guild's calendar when we actually undertake a piece of commercial walling for a donation to Guild funds. This traditionally replenishes our funds to maintain the financial stability of the Guild so your attendance and support is critical for our long term prosperity. At the time of writing we do not have a venue to announce, so please check for details later with Woody.

Thank you for your support during the past year. The continued success of the Guild is solely dependent on the support and participation it receives from its membership.

I wish you a happy, healthy and successful 2009, and do please support us and enjoy dry stone walling with us again this year.

Michael Booth
March 2009



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YDSWG Newsletter – Spring 2009: Some notes from the Secretary

1. Alpujarra Project in Spain

This is a call for volunteers to spend any time they can spare in the La Taha region of the Alpujarra in the mountains of the Spanish Sierra Nevada, about 1 hour from Granada. The local inhabitants need help with the repair/maintenance of slate walls in the area, some are used for water courses to guide snow melt for irrigation and others are retaining walls for the fields.

The whole area has been allowed to decline; it was once very productive and is in a beautiful part of the world. The locals are ageing, but friendly and keen to make the area productive again. There are also some enthusiastic ex-pat Brits helping but more assistance would be very welcome.

If you are free to join them for an unpaid, uninsured, but rewarding and greatly appreciated working holiday in the sun; well fortified by good local food and wine, please do get in touch with the UK organiser.

Her name is Deborah Lewis-Green - phone 01347 868234 or e-mail thegreenzoo@btinternet.com

2. Car sharing scheme

It has always struck me as somewhat incongruous that the Guild is formed of a membership keen on the environmental aspects of our lovely countryside; they will willingly give up their time to build or repair walls to improve the landscape, **BUT**, everyone drives there individually to do these good deeds!

Anna Bryer has kindly volunteered to act as co-ordinator to try and reduce the effects of this by putting people living near each other in touch for coming to practice meets for example. It would be infringing member's data protection rights to just publish an address list, so this seems the best way of proceeding. If you are of like mind and willing to participate, please get in touch with her - phone 07949 822926 e-mail paul@anna34wanadoo.co.uk

3. Membership card

Sadly, the time involved in producing membership cards for all members is just too demanding; we hope you will accept the car stickers as an alternative for the adults and leave a more manageable print run of cards for the Junior members to whom they are important

4. Dick Laidler's build April 4th and 5th

You will have read about Dick's accident last year in the Chairman's newsletter. Tom Orde-Powlett, the son of Lord Bolton, has very generously



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agreed to sponsor a wall build around the wood to the west of Bolton Castle in aid of the Great North Air Ambulance in recognition of the part they played in getting Dick to hospital that day. The Guild will also put £100 into the pot. So, if you can spare time on either or both days, the more the total fund will become for this very worthwhile charity. Meet up initially at the Castle car park at 9am

5. Membership renewal

Membership rates remain as they are at £7.50 for adults, £2.50 for juniors and £100 for life members. We urge you to use the Standing Order method of payment for regular automatic payment; it helps a lot with Guild cash flow. Above all, **PLEASE** renew before 31st May, later than this runs the risk of losing your membership. Please correct any errors in the membership records we have for you, and include an e-mail address, so much easier than using phone or post to contact you.

You can alternatively renew your membership online using your credit or debit card through ePayments – go to epayments.ydswg.co.uk and follow the link for Membership renewals.

6. Skills tests

For those of you wishing to have a go at Basic, Advanced or Master level tests; there is no charge for a Basic test if it can be conducted at a regular practice meet, not all sites are suitable though. Please get in touch individually to make the necessary arrangements and for a copy of the test specification involved.

Thank you. Practice meets this year are ALL on Sundays - have a good year.

Woody