



Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild

Autumn Newsletter 2014



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Cover photography credits

Front cover: The Crimble Valley Oracle at the Great Yorkshire Show

Above: Students on a course at Beckwithshaw

Back cover: The Crimble Valley Oracle

Welcome

Dear Member,

This is now a regular end of year format for the Guild to let members what's been happening and we hope you will enjoy reading through it. We are always looking for new and interesting things to add so if you have any unusual or interesting articles or photographs please send them into us and we will include them in our next edition. We can also add them to the website with your permission.

I do hope you enjoy reading through this latest edition

John Pridmore
Chairman

Chairman's Chat

It must be autumn again as I am trying to cast my mind back over the last 6 or 7 months to review what the Guild have been doing. Needless to say it has been another busy year with plenty of activity and events to report on.

Firstly the formal stuff. The Guild AGM takes place on Saturday November 8th, 3pm 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 email the Secretary or call by 6th November to confirm what you would like, either Pork Pie or Vegetarian Quiche, contact details at the end of the booklet*) 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.

A brief bit of committee news is that Dave Edwards and Brian (Woody) Wood have advised they will be stepping down from the committee. Brian has been gradually handing over his responsibilities over the last couple of years and has finally managed to complete the process. I'm sure he is looking forward to more time in his workshop on the many engineering projects. Many thanks to both for their contributions over their time on the committee.

I would like to extend 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 or on a taster session at one of our practice meets. I do hope you will continue your membership into 2015 and take the opportunity to attend some of the events we have planned for next year.

Membership numbers are much healthier this year due to an increase in attendees to courses and more people coming to have a go at taster sessions. All those members that renewed this year your continued support is appreciated.



The Guild courses have been very successful this year after we changed the offering slightly to bring the price down to below £100 with more than twice the level of attendance to the previous year. All those new members that attended a course this year are very welcome to attend Guild events. All our practice meets are free to existing members.

Over the last year we have demonstrated at several shows and events which are a great way for the Guild to promote itself and the craft. The first show of



the year was our regular visit to the Duncombe Park Country Fair at Helmsley on the North Yorkshire Moors. The weather stayed fair and the demonstration was very popular amongst the visitors. The Countryside Days educational event was next on the calendar. Here members of the

Guild demonstrate the craft to students of all ages to make them aware of the craft and talk to them about how walls are built and maintained. This was then followed by The Great Yorkshire Show This year was a unique feature build down by the brown gate and attended by no less than HRH Princess Anne. You can read a more detailed review later in this booklet.

Unfortunately we were unable to attend the Masham Steam Rally this year as a preservation order had been placed on the small section of wall we had built and the show were unable to source any additional stone to extend the existing wall.

We were invited back to the Ripley Show again in August but as you can see from the picture it wasn't the best day to build a wall. There wasn't a dry stone to be had anywhere and the hardy



team of demonstrators looked more like North Sea fishermen than wallers. The show season will end on 19th & 20th October with the Countryside Live event at the Great Yorkshire Showground. Pictures of these events can be seen on our website ydswg.co.uk so please go and have a look if you haven't seen them already.



The walling competition was again cancelled this year due to lack of entries. We will be reviewing the format and timing of the competition to see if more interest can be generated so if you have any suggestion on what might make you come along and

compete then please pass them on. Practice meets were again held throughout the year at various venues throughout Yorkshire. Once again we started off at Cold Kirby on top of Sutton Bank where a small squad extended the wall we started last year. This was followed by our regular spring visit to Carperby where despite a pleasant day we only managed to get two members attending. We then went to Bingley where two



ladies on a taster day and the Chairman managed to repair five metres of wall on a beautiful spring day.

The next event was the first of our visits to The Bivouac at Ilton early in June. As you can see from the picture office 'flaming June it certainly was not! Luckily we had a gazebo to keep the worst of the rain off but even with that we all ended up rather wet and muddy. Typically by the time I arrived home that evening it was nice enough to sit out and barbeque. We will be continuing this wall over the next couple of years so will be nice to see the progress year by year. Later in June we held our regular practice meet at Long Liberty Farm, Harrogate in the back drop of the Harrogate Wind Farm. Another small team enjoyed a glorious day and added another section to the stretch of wall we have been renovating for several years.

We then returned to Garbutt Farm at Cold Kirby for practice meets in July and August to continue with the limestone wall project we started the previous year. We should be back again next year so it will be great to see this wall progress.



We returned to Carperby on the first weekend in September for our annual sponsored build weekend. A good turnout on both days resulted in several sections of wall being repaired. The teams on the day split into small groups working over different sections of the wall. Unfortunately

Saturday was a little damp but it didn't deter the squad. Any enjoyable day all round and some nice repairs made to sections that were down or about to come down

As I write this review we still have 2 practice meets remaining so the season now stretches from March to November offering many opportunities for members to come along for an enjoyable day out.

Practice meets are free to all members and an enjoyable



day out. Not only that anyone wanting to improve their skills can get tips from experienced wallers that are always on hand to offer advice. Any member is welcome to use the practice meets as an opportunity to take one of their walling certification tests and remember the basic test is free of charge and only involves repairing a small section of wall so why not give it a go next year.... what have you got to lose? All you need to do is book the test as early as possible with either Sarah or myself.

Finally as Christmas approaches why not consider giving a 2 day Dry Stone Walling gift voucher as a present. These are now offered at the revised price of £99 which will be held for 2015 courses and is great value for a full 2 days activity in a relaxed and enjoyable environment

Many thanks to our kind sponsors Meggan Jeffery, Jonathan & Annette Langhorne and Sallie & Julian Lloyd, your support is greatly appreciated. Finally thanks to all members who have attended meets and helped out at shows this year, the Guild wouldn't exist without you.

John Pridmore
Chairman

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Well done our Henry

Longstanding Guild member Henry I 'Anson receives an award for 25 years service to the Show from Honorary Show Director (and Guild President) Bill Cowling (although Henry tells me it's actually 28). Henry has been part of the various builds that the Guild have undertaken at the show over many years although this doesn't mean you can retire Henry. See you next year!



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An Experience Shared

The following article has been written by Brian Wood who would like to share his experience in the hope that it might benefit other Guild members and their families.

“Some of you may remember that 5 years ago, while I was still Guild Secretary, I had surgery for prostate cancer. Until a further 5 years have passed (in 2019) I am still regarded as ‘at risk’ and I have an annual blood test for PSA, the **P**rostate **S**pecific **A**ntigen which is useful in assessing the condition. Sadly, it is not an infallible marker, but it is a diagnostic tool nevertheless. My results are now routinely as close to zero as matters, they were 20+ before the surgery, some 4 times what might be regarded as normal at the time.

The facts are these:

Prostate cancer is **the** most common cancer in men aged 50 or above; 1 in 10 men in the UK will get this cancer in their lifetime. From our Guild membership records that might be as high as 12 men.

The comparable figure in the USA is nearer 1 in 6, probably due to a regime of annual checking for medical insurance of all men aged 50 or more. In the UK the annual rate of detection is about 40,000 annually and 10,000 men die each year. Death is not from cancer of the prostate itself but from escaped cancer cells that then lodge in bone in the pelvic cavity. This is a much more serious life threatening condition which can at best only be 'managed' and is not curable. Management in these cases is by radio therapy over the whole pelvic region, possibly also including chemotherapy; it leaves the victims exhausted and open to other infections because of the suppression of the immune system. The treatment period is over many weeks and involves regular travel to hospital.

Not all prostate cancers are malignant, some are benign in that they confine themselves to swelling the gland concerned, but the interference to proper functioning of the urinary tract is still the same. Frequent visits to the loo are needed; it is often painful to get started and frequently equally unsatisfactory in finishing. The inability to empty the bladder fully with only a miserable dribble can lead to the added misery of a bladder infection from retained urine which might become resistant to treatment.

Men seem to think that this won't happen to them and that by ignoring the symptoms it will somehow go away. Part of this reluctance quite probably comes from a fear of loss of libido or putting it bluntly, not being able to get your leg over afterwards.

While this is a potential outcome in some cases, early detection from seeing your doctor will lead to the most effective individual treatment. In my case the cancer had spread into the surrounding tissues local to the prostate and the next advance would have been into bone. I paid the price for tardiness.

Treatments vary and are tailored to maximise the success in fighting the cancer. They can vary from hormone treatment to reduce testosterone levels (the cancers feed on the hormone) radiotherapy by two different methods and surgical removal. There are some combinations possible as well, but it is I think very important to appreciate that surgery (the most effective treatment) may not be an option **after** radiotherapy as irradiated tissue is slow to heal properly and other complications can set in. I was judged fit enough for keyhole surgery with all the advantages it offers of minimal scarring and faster recovery. I went in on Monday evening to James Cook hospital in Middlesbrough for Tuesday surgery and returned home on Friday afternoon.

There were the obvious restrictions on allowing time for wounds to heal and there was absolutely NO lifting for a while.

Oddly enough, the most uncomfortable stage in recovery followed me home and that was getting rid of the CO2 gas with which my pelvic cavity had been inflated to keep the operating area clear of intestines and other organs. There was a lot of cramping and embarrassing noise for a while!

Full control of bladder function took me the average time of about 3 months afterwards. Riding a push bike was actually the most severe test, obviously caused by localised pressure effects from the saddle.

This brief article is not intended to be a scare story, far from it.

My main reason in writing it has been to raise awareness, hopefully to prevent unnecessary suffering for other victims and possibly even save lives. I hope it has been timely and maybe reading about my personal experience will have helped you, the reader, make up your mind to do something about it.”

Brian Wood (Woody)

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The Crimple Valley Oracle

The wall was commissioned by The Yorkshire Agricultural Society as the Guild's project for 2014. The brief was to build a



permanent feature at the Brown Gate that could be enjoyed for years to come by all those visiting the show.

The project was taken on by Guild members Dave Purvis and Johnny Clasper with Dave looking after the organising and Johnny creating the design.

Preparation started early and Dave, not one to miss an opportunity managed to

secure some good stone from stands at the Spring flower show. This was added to with a kind donation from F&R Jacksons quarry which ensured we

had sufficient stone. Meanwhile Johnny was dreaming up the design which as you will see doesn't follow normal walling rules. After much more organising from Dave and some pre work from Johnny we made it to the show. We enlisted the help of volunteers from The Yorkshire Dales National Park Volunteers to ensure we had enough manpower to complete the build.



Tuesday was about creating the foundations to shape the flow for the next 2 days. Wednesday started off with a Royal visit with HRH Princess Anne visiting the build as her first stop in a tour of the show. Here she is meeting Johnny, Dave and I (if I'd have known I would have put my cool shades on!) She was quite knowledgeable on the subject of walls and the fact that I'm not writing this from 'The Tower' means I must have got my P's and Q's in

the right order. The rest of the day saw the completion of the curved walls whilst Johnny progressed the eye. Thursday was spent shaping the top stones to finish off the wall.



The Ennismore Irish Arch

This article is from our Canadian based member, John Redican

In July this year I was afforded the opportunity to work again with probably Canada's most celebrated Dry Stone Waller John Shaw-Rimington on a project he had designed for the farming town of Ennismore Ontario.

The community has deep Irish roots and as such wanted to visually celebrate that heritage with a dry stones arch on a small patch of land on the way into town.

The project was designed as a teaching activity for amateur wallers like me and people who were new to the craft under the ever watchful eye of John. The project was set to run over 2 weekends with a split of 30/70 experienced wallers to novices in a team of 10 people. The schedule for the construction of the arch spread over 2 weekends although the first weekends' progress was assessed as a few of the team decided to put in a few extra hours mid-week to get ahead of schedule to ensure completion on the second Sunday.

The dimensions for the arch were 40 feet in length 3.54 feet wide with a height of 8.5 feet in the centre to accommodate the arch which was 6.5 feet high and just over 3 feet wide at the opening. The diagram below shows the artists impression (JSR) of the project.

The estimated amount of stone was 30-35 tons but this climbed to 45 tons as the project commenced.. The weather was hot and the support of the



Ennismore Horticultural Society in providing water and food was appreciated by all. I also believe that many of the first time wallers were hooked by the end of the first weekend despite the aches and pains which I am sure they work up with on Monday morning. John was ever vigilant and took pauses at every opportunity to stress teaching points and ensure that the work was done properly . Building the wall corners was a great learning opportunity in selecting the necessary stone to build the corners then dressing it to ensure a good fit.

The work progressed well albeit a bit slow to begin with as people got used to working with each other. We spent a lot of time on the correct heaving method which ensured a good solid construction all the way up. The challenge of establishing 2 curves up to the top section of each arch was solved using small link chains that, once hung provided for a symmetrical approach to follow in lieu of the traditional lines along the wall.

The setting of the 'voussoir' stones surrounding the arch was, as expected, a time consuming process but very necessary to get right. The challenge to the arch was finding stone of the correct wedge shape to give the correct contours but as you can see I think the effort paid off.

This was a huge undertaking but very satisfying especially as we were informed the arch was to form the backdrop for an upcoming weeding photo shoot. Nice to see these ambitious projects being undertaken in Canada





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