



# Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild



/ydswwg



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Cover photography credits

Front cover: Course at Low Belford Farm and Yates House

Above: Practice Meet at Cropper Fold farm

Back cover: Course at Carlton Lodge

## Welcome

Dear Member,

We are drawing to the close of another season of activity with the Guild. which means it's time for me to 'don' the thinking cap and try to remember what's happened through the year. You could help me out here! 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*

## Getting Involved

The Guild is run by a small committee, however the administration is run by just a couple of members. These administration roles are Secretary, Treasurer, Course Coordinator and Events Coordinator. Each role requires a small amount of time each week to carry out the duties. We would really like to get one or two more people into the committee to help in one of these roles. You don't need to be a waller or know much about walling. All you would need are some basic computer skills and be organised. Full training and support would be given for any of the roles. Location is not an issue and the roles can be carried out from the comfort of your own home.

If you would like to get involved and support the guild then please get in touch with John or Sarah on [contactus@ydswg.co.uk](mailto:contactus@ydswg.co.uk) or call 07341 777853

On a separate note I would like to welcome two new instructors, Derrick Garbutt and Meggan Jeffery. Also wishing well to Keith Ledger who is due to have a bionic hip fitted anytime now. Hope you are up and about soon.

*John Pridmore*

## Chairman's Chat

Another year has flown by (I know I must be getting old as writing this review seems to come around quicker every year) and what a year it has been. We have gone from the worst winter in years to the best summer.

First, the formal business. The Guild AGM takes place on Saturday November 10th at 3pm at Thirsk Town Hall. There is an agenda and voting form enclosed with this booklet. As a member you are more than welcome to come along. We are always open to new ideas and suggestions on how the Guild can further improve how it functions. Refreshments will be provided after the event (*please email the Secretary if you are attending or call by 5th November to confirm what you would like, either pork pie or vegetarian quiche, contact details on the back cover*). It is also a great opportunity 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. I hope to see some of you there!

On a personal level I became out of contract at the end of November last year so I decided to go out walling in December and then start to look for a new job after the new year. I thought it would be fine as winters for many years had been mild. Little did I know that we would have the worst winter for many years. The days were cold and often wet then the snows came. This is a picture of one of the walls I was working on. The top stones you can see are over five foot high. Even when the snows had gone, spring was very late in coming with more cold and damp days well into April. Bad knees forced me back to a desk job and I started on 4th June, more or less when the heatwave started. Typical!

2018 has been another busy year for the Guild with courses, practice meets, shows and events. Our membership is over 200 again which is great and our





finances are stable and in a good position. We have even surpassed last year's record number of course attendees which is also very impressive.



Our highly successful courses have had another record year with 110 people attending between April and October.

The success of the courses is down to several factors one being is that we have managed to keep the cost at £99 for the weekend which is great value for two days intensive tuition.

The other factors are the relaxed and friendly tuition from our team of instructors and the great administration done by Graham Brown. Once again people have come from all parts of the country to take part. All the courses are now held at venues where the students have rebuilt walls that are functional and used as part of the land for stock control. We even rebuilt a listed wall at Fountains Abbey which was probably over two hundred years old. I have instructed on a couple of courses this year and have enjoyed teaching as much as the students have learning. I'm not the best at remembering names so in a recent course at Yates House I managed to get a group with three Daves, which was great for remembering names although three people answered every time I shouted Dave. I have seen positive feedback from all our students and speaking to the instructors all our team have really enjoyed teaching. All those that have been on the courses have built walls that will probably outlast most of us and be standing for many years beyond that. All those attending courses automatically become members of the Guild until April next year and can attend all Guild events free of charge. You are welcome to come along to any remaining practice meets. All these events are attended by experienced wallers who are on hand to offer support and help to any members looking to brush up their skills.

Country shows have also been one of the mainstays of the Guild programme. Shows give us a great platform to show and demonstrate the craft and also promote the great courses we run. The first show

of the year was Springtime Live at the Harrogate Showground. This year we ended up with a pitch outside - we all know how cold and wet the spring was and this day was no different, so a big thank you to all those who braved the conditions and helped out on the stand. The next event was Duncombe Park Show at Helmsley which a little warmer and dryer than the previous show. True to form, a batch of rough limestone was delivered and the team did a great job of putting a wall together. The one advantage of this stone is you rarely pick up a hammer and just wall it as it comes.



As usual there was a much interest from the show visitors who enjoyed watching the team work.

Duncombe Park was followed by the Great Yorkshire Show where for the second year running we were let down, this time on the supply of stone. We had a great location behind the food hall but unfortunately all we could build was a small demonstration wall. Thanks to James Garwell for organising and re-organising the build. Next year we hope



to do something more permanent. Congratulations to our President Bill Cowling who was also the show's President this year, once again meeting members of the Royal Family. I'm sure he is on first name terms with most of them now!

We attended Ripley Show again in August and Henry and I had a vast amount of interest from the public. Even the rather large split in my trousers failed to scare anyone off. Unfortunately, the two shows we had planned at the Yorkshire Museum

of Farming failed to go ahead once again due to stone supplies. I suppose the practice meets really started last November with our final meet of the year at Cropper Fold Farm. This was a nice autumn day and the team completed a good section of wall. The new year started with our traditional early visit to Carperby in the spring which saw a good turnout however a rather inclement day saw an early finish to the meet. You would never have guessed that we were due a wonderful summer at this point. Back to Bingley at the beginning of May on a good spring day. We worked on a section that needed raising to become properly stock proof. The first practice meet at Low Belford Farm saw a small group extend the wall that had been started on a course the previous year. The next event was at Pen View, Thoraby where Cliff Bailey put on some great hospitality for the team attending. Once again, I missed the event so I will try again to get there next year. We then attended a



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venue we used to go to many years ago at High Lodge Farm, Scawton.

The stone here is different to what we normally see, being thin limestone. It makes a great looking wall but does take a long time to get up. Again, you don't often need to pick up a hammer.

The next meet was at Long Liberty Farm where we started on a new section of wall after completing the previous wall we were working on last year. As there were only three of us we could only manage to make a small start on this. We then moved onto West Bolton Farm for our sponsored build and were well looked after by our hosts. As I am writing this we still have a meeting Low Belford and the final event at Cropper Fold Farm to come. For all new members a reminder that these events are free as part of your Guild membership and are a great place to come along and improve your skills or just have an enjoyable day out in the fresh air. Many thanks to all those who have looked after us at events providing bacon butties, cakes and cups of tea. They are lovely and really appreciated. Finally, thanks to all members who have attended meets and helped out at shows this year.

*John Pridmore*  
Chairman



# Antidote To Walling

I have been an active member of the Guild now for some twenty-eight years and began walling, after the very briefest of instruction from a local Dales farmer. It was a necessary activity to repair walls around our small holding in the Yorkshire Dales having bought it in 1982. I look back on some of those repairs now and shudder, hoping that a few at least are still standing!

Some of you may remember I was strong-armed into taking on the posts of Secretary and Treasurer, that was soon after moving to the Thirsk area eighteen years ago. And now, having shed those responsibilities successfully, I have been able to return to my first interest which is mechanical engineering. Our Chairman thought that something written on an entirely different activity by way of a change would be of interest to the readership.

Engineering isn't just fixing vehicles, useful as that is and was in the Dales; over the years I have built up a comprehensively equipped engineering workshop. One of the milling machines is home built from castings and bar and I have added to the equipment inventory by drawing heavily on the experience gained during my time working for Rolls-Royce Aero engines and HM nuclear submarine Navy. This article will hopefully give a brief insight into how I occupy some of my time outside walling, which is now admittedly somewhat curtailed by my advancing years, creaking knees and a strong preference to keeping warm!

It is not all about oil and grease either, although there are episodes where that plays a part. What gives me pleasure is mending things which have little or no market value (except to the owner of course) such as vintage workshop machinery. I also get satisfaction from general problem solving that otherwise gives rise to a perfectly good piece of kit being scrapped because no one else knows how to cure it, or can be bothered to think about it.

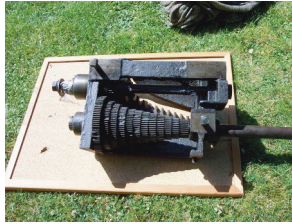
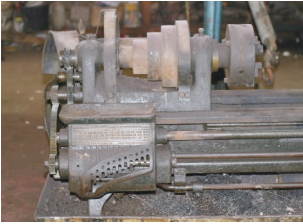
I can't say I make a living at what I do, far from it, but there is a growing widening of the beaten path to my workshop door with all manner of things to be done. I have made and repaired things for local businesses and individuals and some of these projects are shown here for interest.

The first was a commission to rebuild the screwcutting gearbox fitted on a 1902 US made Hendey metalworking lathe. This was a sad old machine, found in a farm workshop south of York and snatched away in time from the scrappy.

The new and wealthy owner (perhaps not so wealthy now!) is a collector living in London; he will be doing the other work himself but wanted this piece of

the machine restored to a working museum quality exhibit.

The work required a complete rebuild of the internals, making fifteen new gears and rectifying years of neglect, abuse and general decay of what was once a fine piece of late Victorian engineering. The gearbox was made only ten years after the patent for the design was issued in 1892 in the USA. The inventor went by the splendid name of Wendall P. Norton and screwcutting gearboxes are still known internationally by his name today. Shown here in photos below are pictures of the lathe amid general rubbish at the farm, followed by the gearbox in the sunshine at home where broken gears are very evident and a view of the finished gearbox in grey primer paint for the owner to match to his colour scheme.



Another recent job for a local electrician is this long SDS stone drill, which I delivered to him after a very short walk next door. This one fell into the category of pioneering work and needed the conviction of success to see it done. The task was to make a 25mm diameter hole through the bell tower wall of a local church to install cabling for flood lighting. The wall was at least five feet thick and made from hard sandstone blocks; as Andrew wryly observed during the task, "It is the Lord's work Woody." It was done despite His interventions, when the drive connection sheared off at four feet into the wall and then again a few inches beyond, requiring speedy repairs to meet a deadline. A hasty redesign gave breakthrough.



The local hire company experts had said it couldn't be done without using core boring equipment with the expensive guidance gear that tunnel boring machines use on BIG projects. It was especially gratifying to see humble pie being eaten afterwards! There might be spin-offs from this job, who knows.

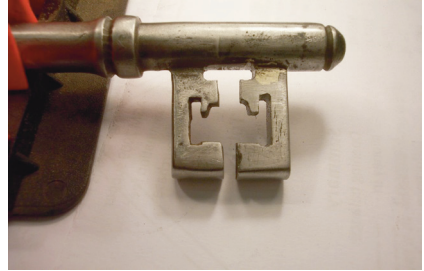


This photo shows something completely

different where I made two matching pieces for a unique chess set in copper pipe that wasn't completed because of illness. The shiny ones are the copies. The work was done for my client as a 50th wedding anniversary present to his wife, whose illness at the time of the metal bashing course all those years ago prevented completion.

I thought this was a lovely idea and it brought great joy to the celebrations. We hope to meet them some time as they travel occasionally to Scotland from the south coast and will pass close to Thirsk on their way. A fine lunch has been promised.

This photo shows the repair I made to the broken key for the local church, I had to make and braze in a whole new insert to match the other side.



And on the subject of keys, these photos are two views of a clock winding key for a three hundred year old Harrison long case clock owned by the National Trust at Nostell Priory, Wakefield.



Harrison was the man who solved the problem of longitude location at sea all those years ago with supremely accurate time pieces carried on the ships of the day. The clock itself (kept working even though it is one of only three survivors) has an all wooden geared movement and on asking questions during a visit I was told that the wooden key was the only one in the whole country. I persuaded the Trust to let me make a modern copy they could use to preserve the precious wooden version, which is itself a copy of the original now long decayed. They were doubtful about the use of nylon and aluminium at first, but did accept these materials in the end.

They are a strange organisation, there was never any thanks or even a note of safe receipt and I had to ask the Conservator if it had been received. Spare

parts made to go with it had become separated and lost even at that stage!

(For those of you who might be interested in Harrison's battle for recognition against the vested interests of the time, there is a very readable account of the story and the making of the chronometers in *Longitude* by Dava Sobel - ISBN 1-85702-571-7)



This photo is of a piece of tooling I made for a special job of my own that has since found several other unexpected uses beyond the original need.

And by way of closing this insight into the activities at Chez Wood, I include this, not a job of my making I'm pleased to say. The sudden failure of the old garage door suspension was so nearly the cause of a nasty accident. I put this job out to contractors to fit a powered roller door as an alternative, which I have to say has been very much more convenient to use. They very helpfully took the old one away with them. It did of course need the 'laying on of hands' before I was satisfied with it. True to form, the safety beam now works properly after I re-engineered the mountings for the infrared parts which had been up made from cheap and nasty stamped out brackets.



*Woody*

## East Grain Gill Project

East Grain Gill is an area of Swaledale within the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The footpath here rises steeply from the valley floor and over the years has suffered from water running off the adjacent fell side, causing the path to be very boggy in places. This path is part of Wainwright's Coast to Coast. It was therefore decided to flag the path with industrial flags (not your common garden ones). A plan was put into operation to airlift the flags from the



nearby village of Muker over the fells to the path.



On the 5th August 2017 I joined with Ian Broadwith (Swaledale ranger) and Paul Sheehan (Lower Wensleydale ranger) at the lift site in Muker.

There were 75 pallets all of which had been marked/identified for specific locations along the path. Together with Ian and Paul we went to site and awaited the airlift. The helicopter was timed at twelve minutes for each return

trip and continued into the late afternoon.

In March this year they got an invite to visit Tom Lord who had a small farm at Stainforth in the southern dales. Tom had a lot of very ancient walls on his farm. At the end of a very good day they saw a limestone wall which had collapsed. Tom explained that it had been blown down by Storm Doris and over a pint in a local pub they decided to return and rebuild the wall as a thank you for a good day.

Due to the remote location the Rangers and volunteers were transported in

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two Land Rovers, which took twenty minutes to get to site. Work started on the 9th August and lasted for thirteen days.

During this time people from across the world were walking the Coast to Coast and we received very welcome comments, especially from people who had done the walk before and welcomed dry feet.

On the 6th September the project was complete. This was to be the last big job for Ian as he retired from the National Park in November 2017.

*Dick Laidler*





## What's Johnny Been Up To?



Guild member Johnny Clasper has been working some more magic with stone. Here are a few examples, including a Gold Medal award at the Spring Flower Show.



## YDSWG Financial Position

I am pleased to confirm that the Guild is in a healthy financial position. A summary of the 2017/18 accounts to 30th September is listed below. If you would like to see the full set please request them from the Secretary.

### Summary

Opening balance	£7812.65
Money in	£15339.36
Money out	£13278.82
Surplus	£2060.54
Closing balance	£9879.19



## Contact details

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