



AGM Saturday 9th November 2013 Thirsk Town Hall.

Present: Sarah Pridmore, John Pridmore, Anna Bryer, Laurence Tucker, Brian Wood, Paula Gittings, Les Maxwell, Dave Leedale, Dave Purvis, Hazel Purvis, Keith Ledger, Dennis Garbutt, Judith Wood, Dudley Nimmo, Bill Cowling, Michael Booth, Euan Raffael, Phill Gray, Ray Ellis.

1. **Apologies:** Jeremy Morrogh Ryan, Kevin Marchand, Meggan Jeffries, Annie and Tariq Anwar, Clifford Bailey, Dave Edwards, Dick Laidler.

Thanks to everyone for attending this years AGM.

Welcome to Bill Cowling-

Bill - Thank you for inviting me and congratulations on the year that you have had and the events that you have staged. The weather has been better this year. Thank you for the support that you have given us at the show ground with the various shows, we are grateful as it adds to the events.

2. **Minutes of last AGM** read by JP proposed by Dave Purvis seconded by Judith Wood.

3. **Matters arising-** none

4. **Chairman's report.** -

I can't believe another year has passed and I am writing the review for 2013. It has been another busy year with plenty of activity and a few new things to report on.

Great news regarding our search for a new course co-ordinator. Les Maxwell has kindly volunteered to look after the role and is now nearing the end of his first year. I would like to thank Les for all his efforts this year in setting up and running our successful course program. We also think we have found a replacement for Woody as Treasurer, hopefully by the AGM we will be able to officially transfer over those duties. Once again thanks to Woody for 'counting the beans' for many years.

Sarah will cover off membership in her report and I will let Les cover off all things about courses although would like to point out that I managed to get through a whole weekend at Beckwithshaw without going through the water pipe

Demonstrations at shows are a great way for the Guild to promote itself and the craft and once again formed a big part of the Guild's activity throughout the year. We were meant to attend Bishop Burton College again however some confusion over the requirements of the build resulted in us having to cancel. However on the following day we attended the Duncombe Park show and despite being given a load of stone that could be best described as field clearance, the team on the day did a marvellous job of putting it together. The Countryside Days educational event was then followed by The Great Yorkshire Show,

which unlike 2012 was blessed with some decent weather. This year the Guild built a two tiered seat next to the brown gate entrance which stood up to a fairly heavyweight test on the final day (as you can see on the photo in the annual booklet). Many thanks to all those who had an input into the construction over the three days and to Dave Purvis for his planning. Masham show was another well attended event and whilst the Guild would have liked to continue the wall it had previously started, the lack of new stone resulted in a take down and rebuild of the existing wall which was a bit disappointing. We will try and get some new stone for next year

A new show for the Guild this year was Ripley Show on the edge of Harrogate which was again well attended. 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 we did end up with a mixture of association and Guild stone so it made for an interesting build).

The walling competition was unfortunately cancelled this year due to lack of entries (we only had 2 confirmed). I was a little less pro active in drumming up competitors this year so I will try and get some more support for next year.

On a brief note of self praise I entered and won the amateur class of the Associations Otley branch competition in September. Got to move up to the pro category next year so I will enjoy my moment of glory.

The mainstay of the Guilds activities are the practice meets held throughout the year. The aim in 2013 was to start at a new venue at Garbutt Farm on the top of Sutton Bank however the extended cold spell and snow meant we had to cancel (if you intend to come to any of these events and the weather looks like it could affect the event please keep an eye on the website, facebook, or just contact me). Things did get going with our April visit to Carperby where a small team led by Dave Leedale made a nice job of a wall end. The first of our sponsored events came next at Bingley but unfortunately the weather was not conducive to DRY stone walling with non stop rain falling for most of the day. This meant the first outing for the Guild gazebos which were erected over the stretch of wall to keep some of the rain off. Well done to Jon Ramsey and Mike Trewick who both passed their basic walling test despite the difficult conditions and thanks to Meggan for the kind hospitality.

The next event was the first of our visits to The Bivouac at Ilton. A large group of willing volunteers continued the section of wall that was started the previous year alongside the entrance road. One member, Colin Short, also built 2 wall ends under the guidance of a master waller (yours truly). This was in preparation for his advanced test in the future. If anyone is thinking of taking one of their guild qualifications and are not sure if they are up to the required standard then this is a great way of having a go without the cost of the examination. If any member is interested in doing this it can be arranged at most practice meets, just contact either Sarah or myself to make the arrangements.

At the end of June another good turn out met at Long Liberty Farm opposite the wind turbines near Harrogate. We are now about three quarter of the way to completing what was previously a derelict wall with a good stock proof boundary.

Next years visit should prove a good challenge as we will need to build over a large boulder that can't be moved. The end of July saw us at a new venue right on the top of Sutton Bank for a sponsored build. This offered a great opportunity to work with thin, irregular limestone which although slow to put up does make a great looking wall.

We returned to Carperby on the first weekend in September for our sponsored build weekend. A good turnout on both days resulted in 3 derelict sections of wall being repaired, one next to a stream and the other on a steep slope. Both days building were made even more enjoyable by the great teas provided by Jonathan & Annette.

We returned to The Bivouac in October and repaired a section that had come down after a rather drizzly autumn day and then the final event saw us back at Meggans where a small squad tidied up a section near the stables. 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.

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.

5. Secretary's report -

2013 YDSWG Secretaries Report

Time seems to have flown by as I have now been in the role for a full 2 years.. Woody will report on the financial situation and Les will give an update on the courses and I will now fill in all the bits in-between those two functions

Membership is down on last year at this point, currently standing at 156 against 182 last year which is a drop of 26 over the year. In total 53 existing members did not renew, 17 from courses held last year, however we did gain 27 new members mainly through our courses run this year. It is difficult to retain members, especially those from courses as they tend to come from all over the country and therefore find it difficult to attend the events we run. This is why the courses we run form a vital part of keeping the Guild running.

The sponsored builds were well attended this year and we raised just over £700 from all those held. Once again thank you to Mr & Mrs Langhorne and Meggan Jefferies and Sallie & Julian Lloyd for their kindness and generosity in supporting us on these events. We also ran a course in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales outdoor festival which was a one day event for 4 people. This is a relationship that we can possibly develop to help attract new members and interest in the Guild.

We endeavour to keep the Guild website updated with new pictures being added and news and events being publicised to the wider world.. 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 is slowly growing and again another great way of promoting the guild. 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. This helps us to communicate to members which we needed to do this year as we had to cancel a couple of events so the more ways we have of communicating the better. 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 reiterate 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 publicised in the spring newsletter but should be on the website much sooner. I do hope you are able to attend some of them.

I hope you all enjoyed the new booklet newsletter which is now the second year we have produced it. I think it is a great improvement on our previous communication. Thanks to Euan for the excellent production along with all those who contributed to the articles. Also thanks to all those who have advertised in the booklet which has helped making the production commercially viable.

Thanks to all the committee members for their contributions and especially to Anna for trying to make sense out of the discussions and turn them into minutes.

Finally I would like to thank Woody again for counting the guild beans for many years and he now plans to fully retire. I would also like to thank my assistant secretaries John, who has helped out with many aspects of the job and to Molly for the stuffing of envelopes with member information twice over the last year (although it would probably be cheaper to get David Beckham to help with the rates she charges)

Treasurer's report -

YDSWG Annual General Meeting Saturday 9th November 2013 Treasurer Notes

Thank you all for coming today, it is good to see you here.

It may come as a relief to some of you that this will be my final presentation and report on Guild finances. It has taken some effort but after three years of searching for a replacement, the Guild has found a lady volunteer who is right for the job.

If, as I hope, you elect her, I will be succeeded by a qualified member of the AAT, the Association of Accounting Technicians. This is not a fully articulated position like an accountant, but it does authorise the holder for book keeping duties and to prepare Company accounts.

So, after years of having a mechanic who can add up figures, you will instead be getting a professional. Paula does not intend to become a waller and neither will she have the advantage, as I have had, of almost clairvoyant powers which come from long knowledge of the Guild and its workings. She will need your help to settle into the job. I am though confident she will do a first class job for you.

I am very pleased to pass on a set of books in good shape with money in them, a very different situation to the one I inherited when I rather rashly offered to take on the position in November 2004; I discovered afterwards there was just £141.23 in the bank and we had coming bills to pay!

To summarise our performance for this year if I may, once again and to my real surprise, the Guild has had another successful year despite the reduced level of course activity and membership you have heard about already. In this year alone we have recovered the greater part of the cost of the 60 tonnes of stone we bought for training purposes last year. I don't propose to talk for very much longer, you have all had copies of the accounts for this year; does anyone have any questions that I can answer or give more information on? It just then remains for me to thank you all for putting your trust in me for the last nine years and to ask you please to welcome Paula Gittings as my successor in the Election of Officers that follows right after this.

Training courses-

The courses have dropped off a little this year, ours were the most expensive, we ran 6 courses this year, most of them were smaller courses with only one tutor. This year we have had some bookings and we will be dropping the price to £99 and we have stopped offering the manual.

Election of officers

Paula Gittings to take over as treasurer - voted in by all.
All other officers in the committee voted in.

Euan Raffael - website update

Hits are down slightly this year, hits - 16000, visits 8600, this may be due to privacy settings on peoples computers so we can't see if they are visiting.
Information included on the website- tips, qualifications, events, news.
No major changes to the site. It does now link into facebook.
JP thanks Euan on his continued support and work on the website.

AOB

Les - **Tour de France**, can we do anything towards this? It is a wonderful opportunity, maybe at Masham as this is a centre that the cyclist pass through. DL suggested an aerial stone cyclist, flat on the ground. DP suggested a site and maybe we could add a press release to the local press, as we are not allowed to advertise. Can we apply for grant money? Maybe a quarry would donate some stone.
Maybe get the local community involved, Euan has contacts in the local parish council that we could ask. To be discussed!

Keith - **The Guild Image** - Membership and internet interest is down, should we revamp our advertising, show stands? We need to improve our image, sell books etc. Trailers that open out are very sophisticated and can make a good show stand. Its important to get the interest of the local people, because often we loose members that have been on courses and they move away. There is some scope for improving our image. To be discussed!

Judith - **Advertising** What about the professional wallers advertising on our website for a small fee. They are linked in although this is not always a very active method of contact.

A discussion followed as to where work originates from, does it come from the internet, usually there is a phone call that comes through to JP and he will pass on the details of an available waller.

Euan suggested an incentive to offer advertising for wallers on our website, it would be cheaper or free as a member, so encouraging wallers to become members.

JP closes the meeting and invites everyone to stay for refreshments. Thanks to Molly and Sarah for providing the refreshments.