



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

Minutes of the Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Guild's Annual General Meeting, 15th November 2008 Held at Sowerby Parochial Hall, 3.00pm

Apologies for absence were received from: Lawrence Tucker, Pete Summers, Ann Hill, Dave Purvis, Brenda Koo, John and Chris Clifton, Nigel Stansbie, Les Plumb, Bill Cowling, Robin Compton, and Paul Hill.

15 members attended the meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting (17th November 2007) were read. With no matters arising, Keith Ledger proposed acceptance, seconded by Dave Leedale and approved by those present.

As there were no matters arising, the Chairman gave his annual report.

Chairman's Annual Report for the year ended 30th September 2008

Firstly, can I commence by sharing with you that I was delighted to be invited to speak at the AGM of the Otley and Yorkshire Dales branch of the DSWA in October. You will be interested to know that their Chairman spoke for three quarters of an hour when giving his annual report and you will doubtless be pleased to hear that I will do my best this afternoon to better that. They are a very dynamic and successful association, having been in existence for only 6 years. I am pleased to report that relations with them are good and they generally accept our reasons for being outside the DSWA.

Secondly the Guild was again honoured to be invited to judge the CLA 's 2008 Yorkshire Dry Stone Walling Competition, with myself and Keith Ledger (a past winner) being the judges. It was pleasing that the eventual winner was 25 year old Steven Marsden with a wall at Stainforth, near Settle.

This is my sixth AGM as Chairman of the Guild and I am delighted to report that once again the Guild has had a successful and active year. Our membership is high, standing at 168 and our financial position is secure.

Can I commence by thanking the Committee for their sterling work over the past twelve months. Once again we need to thank Woody for his dedication and hard work as both Treasurer and Secretary. He is truly the engine room of the Guild and it's increasing success, activity and exposure are in the main due to him.

Our grateful thanks need to be expressed to Anna Bryer, who took on the new post of Committee Minute Secretary at last year's AGM. This is an important and critical role which further strengthens the work of your Committee.



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

During the past year we have most successfully demonstrated and promoted the craft of dry stone walling at: Pickering Game and Country Fair; Duncombe Park Country Fair; Countryside Live Days at the GYS; The Great Yorkshire Show; Masham Steam Rally, Careers Day at the GYS and Scorton Show

Thank you to all those of you who have assisted at those events. I am sure that you will have enjoyed the experience of walling 'in public' so to speak, and I do hope that you have also enjoyed the fellowship of your fellow wallers.

The permanent walls at Masham Showground and the Great Yorkshire Showground are now almost complete and look magnificent. We await with anticipation as to where we will be building next year!

Practice Meets have been held at:

Nab Farm, Kepwick; Stay Farm, Kepwick; West Bolton Farm, Carperby; Medds Farm, Rosedale; Hollin Bower Farm, Chopgate and West Grove Farm, Carperby.

Support for these has generally been good and again thank you for supporting these events when we try and mix experienced wallers with those with less mileage under their belts. It is also an opportunity for Basic and Master Tests to be taken when appropriate.

The attendance at our annual sponsored build at Healaugh was good. Please remember that this is our one major fund raising event of the year which provides monies to tide us over the winter months and to provide some financial insurance for future unpredicted expenditure. The Guild is again much appreciative to Mr and Mrs Morrogh-Ryan for their generous sponsorship the last 3 years. It is probable that we have completed all the outstanding work at the Morrogh-Ryans and will need to look elsewhere for 2009!

Our Annual Walling Competition was held at Stay Farm, Kepwick, was much better attended than in the recent past, with the welcome appearance of some new faces on the day. Perhaps this was because we paid stint monies for the first time! Thank you to Judge Clifford Bailey.

The results were

Open	1. John Pridmore;	2. Dave Leedale;	3. Michael Booth.
Amateur	1. Brian Edmunds;	2. James Bailey;	3. Andy Summers.

During the year our excellent instructors have trained 50 individuals to the usual high standard at our two locations, Thirsk Auction Mart and Fountains Abbey. Over the past three years we have trained more than 125 individuals and the demand continues to increase.



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

We had a useful Instructors Evaluation Day at Masham at the start of the year to discuss how things had gone the previous year, enrol new instructors and generally strengthen the training procedures.

The Guild needs to be looking at some sort of succession planning for its Committee as some of us have been involved for several years. Myself, if elected as Chairman, would like to make 2009 my swansong and I know Woody and some of the other members would like to step down in the near future.

It is important to share the load [and it is not onerous] and so we could do with a couple of new faces to come forward and help to take the Guild forward.

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

Michael Booth
Chairman 2008

As there were no questions following the report, approval was duly proposed by Keith Ledger, seconded by John Pridmore and accepted by those present.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30th September 2008

The accounts again show that the Guild has had another very successful year financially. The summary shows a healthy situation, with a good margin of surplus to carry forward for the future.

The gazebos bought last year have been put to good use this year and appreciated by public and Guild members alike. The new banner bought this year really draws attention and finishes the appearance of our stand.

Keeping the website up to date and well supplied with photos and comment on our activities has absorbed a lot of our income, but on the credit side we have sold courses, gift vouchers and membership well in excess of that investment. It may be of interest to know that in a recent survey, some 80,000 visits to the website took place in 9 months from all over the planet. It is clearly the way ahead. Perhaps though we should now be selective in the new material added.

Much of the Guild income now comes from training courses, four places are already sold for next year, and enquiries for these and gift ideas come in at the rate of nearly one a week. The Guild is looking into an alternative site to Askham Bryan College for our courses using Thirsk Garden Centre, a large starting investment for stone would be needed.



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

Guild membership for the year is included in the course fee, and whilst we accept that the wastage rate in renewals from these members will be high, we have again retained a reasonable proportion of the intake from last year. Current membership continues to grow as a result and is now 168; there are already several more enthusiastic new members from courses and direct entry this year I am sure we will retain. Indeed, we have a new life member straight from the website in the last two weeks. So, taking all these things into account, the Guild is doing pretty well.

Brian Wood

There being no questions on this report, the Chairman invited approval, this was proposed by Phil Gray, seconded by Anna Bryer and accepted by those present.

Officers and Committee

The present officers and committee were prepared to serve another term and the Chairman was very pleased to accept both Dave Leedale and Richard Laidler as new Committee members volunteering from the floor.

The members present endorsed the change, following proposal by Keith Ledger and seconding by Anna Bryer; the posts are therefore as follows:

Officers

Chairman	Michael Booth
Secretary	Brian Wood
Treasurer	Brian Wood

Committee: Dave Purvis, Clifford Bailey, Dennis Garbutt, John Pridmore, Anna Bryer, Dave Leedale and Richard Laidler.

Any Other Business

1. Judith Wood raised the topic of car sharing to the various meets. Those present were in agreement that it made sense, and willingness to participate could readily form part of annual renewal. An organiser would though be needed, with the plea by Judith for that person to be someone other than Woody!

2. Judith Wood also pointed out that continued financial growth of the Guild might begin to attract attention from the tax office and that perhaps the sponsored build had now outlived its usefulness. The Chairman felt that the amount involved was unlikely to attract such attention. The meeting also felt that a less remote site might prove more accessible, and if necessary the event could be treated as a practice meet.



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

3. Richard Laidler called for member sponsorship at a meet he is to organise to support the Northern Air Ambulance service for whom he had great respect after needing their services following a recent severe accident in the Dales. The Secretary added that perhaps the Guild could also make a direct contribution.

With no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 4.15pm. A fish and chip supper followed for those members and partners staying on.

Those present: Anna Bryer, Keith Ledger, Richard Wheeler, Dave Leedale, Judith Wood, Brian Wood, Michael Booth, Phil Gray, Christine Rowland, Gary Muir, Andrew Carr, Peter Christopherson, Richard Laidler, Clifford Bailey, Dennis Garbutt and John Pridmore.