

THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

YDSWG Newsletter – April 2008

Welcome to 2008 with the YDSWG!

A special welcome to those of you who joined us during the past year, many 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 enclosed with this Newsletter our **Programme for 2008** and a reminder (where applicable) that your Annual Subscription is due.

The revised location and format of our AGM in November appeared to be successful and we were again delighted that our President Bill Cowling was able to be present. The following Committee was elected:

Chair	Michael Booth
Treasurer & Secretary	Brian Wood
Committee Secretary	Anna Bryer
Committee	Clifford Bailey
	Dave Purvis
	Dennis Garbutt
	John Pridmore
	Michael Rosher
Company Secretary	Judith Wood

After the business part of the AGM was successfully completed there was a very good presentation by Euan Raffel who has designed our excellent web site - www.ydswg.co.uk. Do visit it as it contains some brilliant photographs and also lists the Guild's activities. 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 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 its increasing success, activity and exposure are in the main due to him.

During 2007 our excellent instructors trained over 40 individuals to the usual high standard at both Thirsk Auction Mart and Fountains Abbey. We will have another useful Instructors Evaluation Day at Masham on 29th March to discuss how things went last year and strengthen the training procedures if this is felt necessary.

You will note that we are running 9 Courses this year; these include courses for Askham Bryan College and FWAG. If you visit our web site you will see



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that we now offer gift vouchers for Training Courses that make excellent and increasingly popular gifts for birthdays and the like.

Your Committee has spent a considerable amount of time during the past year considering the **Guild Qualifications**. Following the formal part of the AGM we discussed the proposals for the new Master Waller Test Specification, which met with general approval. The launch of our website has inevitably exposed the Guild and its activities to a much wider and potentially more critical audience and we recognise that we must move forward. We will continue to offer the **Basic Certificate** in its present form, with follow-on certification to a new qualification of **Advanced Certificate** and finally the **Master Certificate**, which will continue to be the highest qualification within the Guild. The Basic qualification will remain free of charge but the attendance expenses of examiners will have to be covered by those candidates attempting the higher qualifications. Hopefully, we can finalise the details at the Instructors Evaluation Day when most of the Guild's 'senior' members will be present. If any member wishes to raise any concern, or improve their understanding of these proposals then please contact either Woody or myself.

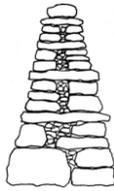
You will also note from the Programme that we are attending 8 Shows and have arranged 6 Practice Meets as well as another Sponsored Build in Swaledale. Your Committee has again tried to create a balance between these to spread them geographically and by date.

We always welcome your help and support at these events, please do join us again this year for a good day out in the fresh air and getting some rewarding exercise. The sponsored event is very valuable to Guild funds; everyone attending makes a big difference to the income generated since it is related to the length of completed wall.

The Practice Meets present an excellent opportunity for you to practice walling in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. They enable you to compare and hone your techniques and skills with other members who will be either more or less skilled than yourself. You might find it useful and interesting to work with the different types of stone at the locations involved.

Shows are always (well nearly always unless the weather is awful!) good fun and do help in the promotion of the craft of dry stone walling. You will meet and talk to interesting people and there is always plenty of time to go round the show itself and 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 more professional and businesslike. We now have a new improved logo for the badge!!

These can be obtained from:
Foxstitch, Batemans Yard, Thirsk, YO7 1HD



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Tel 01845 526297

Email mike@foxstitch.freemove.co.uk or alternatively foxstitch@hotmail.com

Web www.bluefriar.com

Thank you for your support during the past year. The continued success of the Guild is solely dependent on the support from its membership. Do please support us and enjoy dry stone walling with us again this year.

Wishing you a happy, healthy and successful year,

Michael Booth
April 2008

A few Secretarial notes if I may.

The website needs more pictures, preferably of walls that are unusual or notable in some way as well as examples of dreadful workmanship to include in the Chamber of Horrors. Take your camera with you on outings and grab them as you see them, we will be happy to include them.

For those of you used to purchasing online, membership and training course costs can now be paid via PayPal to allow you the convenience of credit or debit card payment. If you are already a PayPal user you can log into your account to send us payment – please send payment to contactus@ydswwg.co.uk and put your name or our reference number in the comments box so that we know who has made the payment. For those of you who do not use PayPal, we are working to add ePayments to the website in the very near future.

Again we urge you to consider setting up a Standing Order on the form provided to automatically renew your membership as it helps us a lot with cash flow to meet operating costs at this time of year.

Some of you will mourn the passing of our coloured maps; our tired ink jet printer is really too slow and becoming unreliable for print runs of this size. I have had to invest in a laser printer to keep on top of things. With the present level of membership, this mailing alone requires almost 1800 sides of paper and print speed is essential!

Have a splendid year; we look forward to seeing you soon.

Woody