



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

YDSWG Newsletter – November 2009

This Newsletter is being sent out with the Notice for our AGM on Saturday November 14th at Thirsk Town Hall (note the change from Sowerby!).

We are following the previous year's successful format of having the AGM on a Saturday afternoon but this time there will be different refreshments at the end of the formal business. This should give us time to mix and socialise.

Please do make an effort to attend! It also an opportunity for members to comment on the successes and failures of the year and make suggestions as what else the Guild should be doing. It is helpful for your Committee to have the now traditional but informal comment session when we have completed the necessary formal business of an AGM

A welcome to all those new members who have joined us during the past several months! Our membership now totals 187. We usually lose a few at membership renewal time but we have an underlying pattern of growth.

Can I again thank 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. Thanks also to Anna Bryer for her tireless note taking at Committee Meetings – it is greatly appreciated

Many of you will know that Woody had a major operation earlier in the year and the attendant recuperation has kept him away from active and physical duties for several months. I am delighted to be able to report that he has made a fine recovery and was able to join me earlier in the month demonstrating at the Careers Day at the Great Yorkshire Showground. His presence was certainly missed at the various Meets and Shows during the year and it is good to see him back in harness!

I am pleased to report that once again the Guild has had a successful and active year.

We commenced in April with Dick Laidler's Air Ambulance build at Bolton Castle, which was well supported and raised in excess of £800 which was a great effort by many members. Thank you!

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

At Masham Showground we have started a new wall near the roadside and hopefully over the years we can progress towards the gateway in the centre of



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the Showground. At the GYS we were asked to rebuild a wall adjacent to the Young Farmers' Pavilion.

Thanks to all 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, as well as the opportunity to look round the event when 'off duty'.

Practice Meets have been held at Stay Farm, Kepwick; West Bolton Farm, Carperby; Medds Farm, Rosedale; Hollin Bower Farm, Chopgate and West Grove Farm Carperby. Attendance for these has been mixed but again thanks to those of you who did support these events when we try and mix experienced wallers with those with less mileage under their belts. They also provide an opportunity for Basic, Advanced and Master Tests to be taken when appropriate.

During the informal discussion following the AGM perhaps we could explore ways of making these Practice Meets more popular. Is it the day or the locations or what? If you have suggestions and cannot attend the AGM please contact Woody or myself!

The attendance at our annual sponsored build which was at West Bolton Farm, Carperby was good. Remember that this is our one major fund raising event of the year and provides monies to tide us over the winter months and to provide some financial insurance for future unpredicted expenditure. The Guild is most appreciative of Mr and Mrs Langhorne for their generous sponsorship, and the splendid teas laid on afterwards.

Our Annual Walling Competition, 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. Thank you to Judge Thomas Harker assisted by Clifford Bailey.

The results were:

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

Particular praise needs to be given to Brian who only last year won the Amateur class and this year wins the top award! Commiserations to Dave Leedale who had to withdraw, part way through the Competition, with a damaged shoulder.

During the year our excellent instructors have trained 55 individuals to the usual high standard at our two locations, Thirsk Auction Mart and Fountains Abbey. Praise to the Instructors - the courses wouldn't work without them. All participants have without exception been very complimentary on their feedback sheets of both the friendly and knowledgeable way the courses have been run.



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We have now trained 180 or so over the past 4 years which is a magnificent achievement. We again 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. If you think you have got what it takes to be an Instructor then please get in touch with either Woody or myself.

Les Maxwell was the first (hopefully of many) to successfully obtain our Advanced Certification. Well done!

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

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. I would like to make 2009 my swansong as Chairman so I do hope someone is prepared to be nominated. I have been your Chairman for seven years and that is long enough, although I am happy to stay on the Committee if elected

Michael Booth
Chairman