



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

YDSWG Newsletter – October 2006

As usual may I express a special welcome to the many new members who have joined us during the past year.

Will members please make a special effort to attend our ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, which is being held at Thirsk Town Hall on Thursday 16th November at 7.30pm. The formal notice for this is enclosed.

Your Committee has enjoyed working together and this has enabled the Guild to continue to make progress and become professional. We would still welcome a couple of new members aboard to ensure continuity. It is not an onerous task, so please think about it.

At the AGM you will hear that the Guild has had a very successful year - both in terms of membership which currently stands at 121, and financially mainly as a result of the donation from the Special Walling Meet at Healaugh near Reeth.

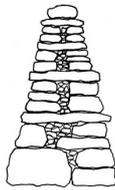
Following the formal part of the AGM I would like to take the opportunity of discussing, with the membership, how we can revitalise interest in our Walling Competition which only attracted 5 entries this year and also to hear whether there are any suggestions for making the AGM more of an occasion.

The Guild has been very active during the year and your Committee have been delighted with the success of our Training Courses. You will hopefully be aware that this last year was our first attempt to formalise instruction in dry stone walling.

During the year we ran 5 courses for a total of 37 trainees – the main reason for the increase in membership as we incorporate a year's membership in the training package. These courses took place at Masham, Fountains Abbey and Keighley. A special thank you to our Instructors who did a brilliant job in all sorts of weather, and we received rave reviews from the trainees. The first courses were marketed by FWAG, which enabled us to get off to a flying start at the start of the season.

Before any actual courses started we held an 'Instructors Evaluation' Session to establish the ground rules and an agreed format for all the training courses which we all found helpful.

We will almost certainly hold something similar next year to establish whether any improvement can be made; so if there are any members who fancy being an Instructor then please let me or our Secretary Woody know of your interest.



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As usual the Guild has been active and has demonstrated at the Duncombe Park Country Show, the Children's Countryside Show at the Great Yorkshire Showground, the Great Yorkshire Show, Masham Steam Rally, Pickering Game and Country Fair and Countryside Live.

A particular thank to all those who have helped to exhibit and assisted on our stand at these shows. It is important that the Guild has a positive and strong presence at these events. Again comment from the membership as to whether we should do more shows would be appreciated.

The Great Yorkshire Show saw an interesting development when we were able to start building a 'proper' wall around the pond at the bottom end of the showground. Grateful thanks to our President Bill Cowling and Keith Ledger for arranging this and organising the stone. Hopefully this wall can develop over the years and become an asset to the showground.

During the year we held 3 Practice Meets – at Sutton Bank, Rosedale and Aysgarth, which were all well attended although the Aysgarth Meet was spoilt by dreadful weather.

The Sponsored Meet at Healaugh in Swaledale was well supported by the membership and we rebuilt a length of quality field wall for the delighted landowner. This annual feature is an excellent way of stabilising the Guild's finances and ensuring our future.

As I have said earlier the Walling Competition was not well supported and we need to consider the format or its place in our calendar.

The results were:

Open	1st	John Pridmore
Amateur	1st	Brian Edmunds and Geoff Newton

Thank you to Judge Clifford Bailey and the Competition Sponsor Mrs R D Peacock.

In this year's Yorkshire Dry Stone Wall Competition, organised by the Country Land and Business Association [CLA] two members of the Guild got through to the final. They were Keith Ledger and Dennis Garbutt with the latter receiving the Judges' special commendation for landscape contribution. Congratulations to both members!

Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Michael Booth (Chairman)