



THE YORKSHIRE DRY STONE WALLING GUILD®

YDSWG Newsletter – Autumn 2011

This Newsletter is being sent out with the Notice of our AGM on Saturday November 12th at Thirsk Town Hall. Your attendance and input into this meeting would be greatly appreciated, as it allows an opportunity to air and discuss any new ideas or ways the Guild can further improve how it functions. Refreshments will be provided after the event, which is a great time to catch up with other wallers on what they have been up to all summer. New members are most welcome to come along and seek advice or help from more experienced wallers who will be attending.

If anyone would like to take a more active role within the Guild we are looking for someone to take over the roles of course co-ordinator (during 2012) and treasurer (during 2013). Woody has decided to gradually hand over these roles after doing a great job over the last few years. Ideally we would like someone in place before the spring next year for the Course Co-ordinator role so they could learn the ropes with Woody in 2012, then fully taking on the role in 2013. Whilst there is a bit more time for the Treasurers' role, if anyone is interested then please get in touch. If you feel you would like to take on either or even both of these roles please contact me by email or telephone (contactus@ydswg.co.uk or 01423 560948)

As I write this we are in the midst of an Indian summer with temperatures well into the twenties. The guilds activities are drawing to a close for 2011 and here is a summary of what has been happening this year and a few snippets for next year

First though, a warm welcome to all the new members who have joined us this year either as direct entry or from one of our many courses. I do hope you will continue your membership into 2012 and take the opportunity to attend some of the events we have planned for next year (more later).

Membership currently stands at a little less than at the same time last year and has been subject to the usual turnover generated through membership via our training courses. There are no plans to change the membership from the current £7.50 for adults and £2.50 for juniors. Although some of you are unable to attend events your continued membership helps to ensure this excellent and ancient craft continues to thrive.

The number of training courses delivered has suffered slightly as a result of the current economic climate however the courses we have delivered have been successful and well received by all those attending. We are hoping to trial a new venue for courses next year, the details of which are currently being finalised. I should be able to update you further in the Spring Newsletter. If you know of a site that might be suitable to stage a course (a covered building and toilets are two of the main criteria) please let either me or another member of the committee know about it.



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The Guild again demonstrated at several shows throughout the year. Starting out at Duncombe Park in May followed by the educational Countryside Days at the Great Yorkshire Showground. We were back there again in July for the Great Yorkshire Show to undertake the most challenging project the Guild has embarked upon. The build was a horseshoe shaped seat consisting of 15 tonnes of newly quarried stone from Windy Hill quarry near Darlington. A pre show squad turned up for a day the week prior to the show and sorted the stone, cut coping stones and excavated the site ready for building (thanks to Dave Purvis, Dick Laider for sorting the squad out and to Keith Ledger for the digger).

Without this prep work we would have only been able to start building by day 2 of the show. The build progressed well throughout the 3 days of the show however we just ran out of time. A final 'finishing off' team returned a couple of weeks later to complete the remaining tasks. Thanks you to all those involved in the project, especially to Paul Hill for the stone carving and to Dave Purvis for all the preparation and planning (I would say it's turned you grey and made your hair fall out but that happened some time ago!!)

Masham Show was at a new location this year and the weather took the Dry out of Dry Stone Walling, however the event was enjoyed by all who attended (despite the stone not being the best). The Guild also attended Scorton Show and is due at the Countryside Live event later in October. Pictures of these events can be seen on our website, so please go and have a look if you haven't seen them already.

Better news on the walling completion this year. We managed to gather enough entries to stage the open class on a beautiful Saturday in early October. The Saturday was one of the hottest on record for October, which meant plenty of sweat and toil for the competitors. Many thanks again to Keith who kindly agreed to judge the competition, to Sarah for providing sausage butties and to Shirley (mother in law) for the cakes. The final result was as follows

- 1st - John Pridmore
- 2nd - Brian Edmunds
- 3rd - John Ford

The Guild held several practice meets throughout the year starting with a beautiful Saturday in April out at Carperby. This was followed by a well-attended meet at a new venue a little further to the west at Cropper Fold Farm near Bingley, however the next event at Cowling became a victim of the weather with driving drizzle putting off any takers (well what do you expect in the middle of June). The event at Bilsdale managed to attract 4 volunteers and this was followed by Long Liberty Farm near Harrogate which was well attended despite a rather autumnal August Saturday. Thanks to all those



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attending these meets and I hope you had an enjoyable day out and also managed to pick up some useful tips. Pictures of some of these meets can be viewed on the web site and thanks also to Meggan Jeffery for the bacon butties at Cropper Fold Farm.

We have a new venue to hold a practice meet and course next year. To give you a little taster you can visit their website www.thebivouac.co.uk. In the spring newsletter I should be able to give you more details on this new venue along with a new 'late autumn' build planned for November (only because the weather in November is now on a par with the English Summer).

The sponsored build was as usual held at West Bolton Farm, Carperby and again many thanks to all those attending and to our hosts Mr & Mrs Langhorn for their generous support and hospitality. The post build teas were excellent and very much appreciated by all.

All the practice meets provide a great opportunity to work with different stone and pick up tips from the more experienced wallers on the day. We can also use the meets to test individuals who wish to take Guild examinations or if required practice ready to take an examination. Those interested in taking either their basic, advanced or master tests please contact a member of the committee to make the necessary arrangements or email contactus@ydswg.co.uk. This year two members successfully achieved their basic level - congratulations to Colin Short and Peter Sudron.

Finally many thanks must go to all those of who have helped out and given freely of their time to Guild events throughout the year. We could not function as an organisation without this generous help to promote and support the craft at the various shows and events. My thanks as usual go to the Committee for their commitment and hard work throughout the year and to Sarah and Woody for looking after the day-to-day administration.

Thank you to all our members for your continued support, without which the organisation wouldn't exist and I wish you all well over the winter months and look forward to meeting up with some of you, either at the AGM or at one of the events during 2012

John Pridmore
March 2010