

# BRANCH ROUND-UP

## Membership

It's that time again. Technically Branch membership runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January, so rather than start chasing in January we're starting now. It costs £10 which is in ADDITION to national membership of £24. You cannot be a Branch member unless you are a member of the DSWA. You can send us a cheque for £10 or £24 if your National subs are due (NB National membership now runs for 12 months from the date you pay your subs, just to complicate matters). You can be a supporter of the Branch for £5 – which in effect means you subscribe to however many issues of "Stonechat" come out in the next year, although this is aimed primarily at members of other Branches and those living outside the Branch area. If you send us £10 and are not a member of the national association you will only be registered as a supporter and £5 taken as a donation.

This is the last edition of Stonechat your current subscription covers if you do not renew before the next issue in February all you will get is the cover and diary plus another reminder.

## CCW Grant



We successfully applied for a grant from the Countryside Council for Wales to promote public awareness of dry stone walling. This has enabled us to purchase laminating equipment, establish a photo library, reproduce pictures, buy new display boards and leaflet dispensers. The grant has also provided for a digital projector and will enable us to produce a bilingual training leaflet to help us publicise future courses.

The new display spurred us on to have our sign-written boards renewed and to try a variety of banners which were unveiled at Cerrig, complete with spelling mistakes etc. They did however look impressive and we will be looking to get them right for next year and extend their range! Hopefully we'll be renewing our tent next year, and applying for a grant for a new project to promote standards, with photographic materials, leaflets and booklets on both dry stone walling and clawdd construction.

All this takes money. Training courses proved a valuable source of income in 2009 especially as all the instructors – Gareth, Iolo, Geraint, Craig, Richard and Sean provided their services free of charge, a situation we cannot rely on forever. We need more ideas and sponsors so please put your thinking caps on. Our guess the weight of the stone competition which was held with 2 different stones over 4 events (2 each) during the summer proved popular and raised around £50 not to be sneezed at. The winners were Matt Stowe of Ggwernymynydd and Iolo Jones, Deiniolen.

Hopefully the display will find a few homes in shop windows during the winter, and the projector will allow us to give talks to other groups/bodies. Ideas on either front would be appreciated by Sean. the



## Training & Certification

Our summer programme proved very popular with Taster days, weekend courses and even a special weekend course for Clwyd Young Farmers. A total of 75 trainee days covering 49 different trainees. A couple have even joined the association.

Next years programme is in the draft stage (see diary) as we are hoping to link up with Loggerheads/Clwydian

Hills AONB. In the North west we hope to introduce a new site or two, and find somewhere to run some clawdd Courses. We have increased the charge for taster days to £20, and full courses are now £100 for the weekend or £80 if you are self funding. One taster fee is deductible from the full course fee. All members qualify for a 10% discount.

To enable those who attend paid training to hone their newly acquired skills we are running Practice days in association with all taster days next year and possibly some courses. Practice days will be for full Branch members only. There will be a fully refundable charge of £20 to book on a practice day, we will normally have to arrange for additional training cover which we don't want to have to do if next to no-one then turns up, as has happened in the past



Taster day, Cae Gwyn, Ruthin. © Craig Evans



We also managed to hold a training day at Hafod Wen for a number of members and others hoping to take craftsmen certificates. 4 new ends had to be created in a length of wall. Thank goodness for Septembers fine weather. 6 Intermediates and 1 Initial took tests, with 1 Initial and 4 Intermediate passes – including branch members Brian Evans and Ray Guthrie

Ray Guthrie on his way to obtaining an Intermediate Certificate. © Sean Adcock

## Branch Displays/Demonstrations

Our display had 4 outings during the summer at the Snowdonia Society Competition/Capel Curig Carnifal and the Eryrys Tractor event before its overhaul following which in new revamped form it emerged at the Cerrig Show for our Competition and finally at our demonstration at the Nant Peris Carnifal. We hope to return to 3 of these next year, although Cerrig will be much missed as it clashes with the DSWA's International Conference to be held in Cumbria, and our resources are too stretched to attend both. Hence our competition will be moving to the Nant Peris Carnifal for 1 year.

## COMPETITIONS:

Congratulations to Branch member Iolo Jones who won the professional class at this year's Snowdonia Society Competition held at the Capel Curig crnifal in



Iolo Jones demonstrating the craft at Nant Peris Carnifal © Sean Adcock

July. Special mention too goes to Chairman Craig (Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> Professional) and Brian Evans (runner up Semi-professional). Meanwhile secretary Sean enjoyed a successful August winning both the Yorkshire and Mid Lancashire professional titles

## Cerrig 2009



The rain held off and 15 stalwarts pitted their skills at our (sometime) annual competition at the Cerrig Show. Ed Park travelled down from Cumbria and walked away with the Amateur class, as well as the new perennial trophy for the best foundation. Sean Adcock won the professional class for the umpteenth time and a new face Matt Stowe was successful in the Novice category. Branch Chairman Craig won the new perennial coping trophy and member

Ed Park (left) and Sean Adcock (right) apply the finishing touches to their walls. © Richard Jones

Aidan Cooke was presented with the Pyrs Roberts trophy as the best North Wales Amateur. Thanks to former Chairman Don Eland and his wife Ann for sponsoring the new trophies and to very generous contributions from Mr & Mrs Freeman Attwood (Pennant Estate, Llangynog) and Justin Kellett of Anglesey Masonry Ltd, Moelfre

### PROFESSIONAL

- 1 Sean Adcock (Penisarwaun)\*
- 2 Craig Evans (Clawdd Newydd)\* (Llandrillo)
- 3 Barry Roberts (Bethesda) (Brynteg, Mon)
- 4 Brian Evans (Maerdy)\*

### AMATEUR

- 1 Edward Park (Cumbria)
- 2 Aidan Cooke (Llangollen)
- 3 Darren Parry (Bethesda)

### NOVICE

1. Matt Stowe (Gwernymynydd)
2. Iwan Roberts
3. John Parry

\* Branch member

### SPECIAL PRIZES

Pyrs Roberts Trophy (Best North Wales Amateur)

A.Cooke, Don and Ann Eland Trophies to E Park (Best Foundations), C Evans (Best Coping)  
Judges were Iolo Jones (Deiniolen) Vic Hollings (Keighley)

Special thanks to Brenda Anna and Arwel for their sterling efforts behind the scenes on the stand especially with the refreshments – ours is definitely the best when it comes to tea and coffee. Not forgetting Richard and Gareth too!

## Barbecue

Perhaps the highlight of the summer was our training weekend and barbecue, glorious weather for the Saturday and an idyllic location along side the River Ogwen. Loads of food including Blaen y nant organic beef and our Chairman's Sandy and Black Sausages (type of pig rather than colour). 11 trainees over 2 days (reduced numbers on the Sunday due to the monsoon) and then around 30

members, supporters and guests on the Saturday Evening.



Left: Sean shows some of those attending the BBQ some of the walls that have been rebuilt at Blaen y Nant. Right, everyone tucks in. Both © Craig Evans

## ecretarial Whinge

We seem to have had a pleasing amount of press coverage. Well I assume so, I get the odd phone call, and see stuff in the papers over here. I send all sorts of stuff to the locals, only they're not my locals. Presumably some of them are your locals. Please if you see anything send it to me, for our records and so I can see who's interested in what. Whole page the article is on is best. I am of course assuming you lot can read?

## Secretarial Rant

At last years AGM I agreed to be secretary on condition that the Branch moved forward and I set a number of goals to be achieved. During the year I frequently repeated the Mantra "Use it or loose it". As Craig has noted we achieved the goals and more largely down to the hard work of the committee plus valuable assistance at events from one or two others. I will stand again but next year we must increase membership and participation and still use it or lose it. At times I almost reached meltdown with the workload, so one more year and if you don't do more to help I WILL go. I note elsewhere in this edition the thought that in North Wales "being able to communicate in Welsh and English is essential." Maybe a slightly unfortunate choice of words. An advantage rather than essential, surely If you know of a bilingual candidate for Secretary wheel them forward and I'll gladly resign. As far as I'm concerned the willingness to undertake work and push the branch forward is far more important than ones linguistic aptitude. The Branch rightly has a bilingual policy, we have Welsh speakers helping at events, we produce what we can in Welsh and English. If we insisted on everything being bilingual little would happen or exist. "Stonechat" certainly would not happen. We need Welsh speakers but above all else we need enthusiasm commitment and a willingness to pull together and not go off on agendas of our own. English Monoglots of the world unite, without us the Branch would be communicating with precious few people full stop.

# Provisional Diary

Actual times and venues will be confirmed in the Winter Stonechat due out in February. We have expanded our training programme, and hope the "North east" events will tie in with Loggerheads and the Clwyd AONB. We are also introducing Clawdd courses, participants for these must have attended a dry stone walling taster day or course. Taster days will be £20/head. Weekend Courses @ £80/£100 self financing/funded. Taster Day fees are refundable for those subsequently booking on a full course. **Practice Meets** will be held for Branch Members in conjunction with all taster days and the BBQ, and possibly some training courses. There will be a £20 booking fee which will be fully refunded on attendance.

September sees the first **International Dry Stone Walling Conference** to be held in the UK, details are yet to be confirmed. It is likely to have a theme along the lines of local tradition/vernacular walling we will be organising Satellite events before and after the event. As the event clashes with the Cerrig Show our competition will be taking a 1 year sabbatical in order to visit the Nant Peris Carnifal where we had a successful demonstration this year.

#### March

10 Branch Meeting. Bryn Tyrch, Capel Curig.  
13 North West Taster Day  
20 North East Taster Day  
27-28 Clawdd Course, North West

#### April

10 North East Taster Day  
17 North West Taster Day  
24-25 North East Training Course

#### May

15 North East Taster Day  
22 North West Taster Day

#### June

5-6 North East Training Course  
19-20 BBQ, Blaen y Nant, Nant Ffrancon  
19-20 Training Course, Blaen y Nant, Nant Ffrancon

#### July

3 North East Taster Day  
7 Branch Meeting. Saracens Head, Cerrig y Drudion  
17 Snowdonia Society Competition  
24 North West Taster Day  
25 Display, Eryrys tractor Event

#### August

1 Demonstration, Llanrhaedr  
7 South Wales Competition, Vaynor Show  
14 North West Taster Day  
21-22 North East Training Course  
30 Half Day Guided tour, Dorothea Quarry stonework.

## *Provisional Diary Cont...*

#### September

4-6 International Conference, Ambleside, Cumbria  
7-8 Clawdd Course, North West  
8 Evening event/talk  
11 Full day Guided Tour Quarry structures, Porthmadog area  
18 North Wales Open Dry Stone Walling Competition, Nant Peris Carnifal  
25-26 North West Training Course

#### October

2-3 Certification Training/Orientation  
9-10 Clawdd Course  
16 DSWA Craftsman Certification day

#### November

3 AGM Foelas Arms, Pentrefoelas

## *Contacts*

The AGM will elect new officers so for now it's just me

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## *Sponsors*

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