

Branch News

Branch of Year



Richard Love (DSWA Chairman) centre with (Cumbria) Branch of Year, left, Sean right.

As you should have noticed elsewhere 6th March was a red letter day for the Branch. Much to my surprise I was attending the management committee for the first time in 15 years to propose the Terry Eggleshaw Archive, and it happened to coincide with Branch of the Year presentations. Much of our (Gareth and I) surprise we topped the Small Branch Category. "Stonechat" received particular praise, apparently one Judges wife complained that he locked himself away and wouldn't come out for a couple of days while he was reading it (the mind boggles). Thanks to everyone who made it a successful year, especially the committee, but also all those who attended or helped out at events, and all those who contribute to "Stonechat". We have a very full programme this summer, with expanded training (below), talks and demonstrations. Please sign up to

help if you can, or just drop in to give moral support. If the Branch is going to continue to develop and the Committee's enthusiasm is to be maintained without reaching overload or burnout we need your help and support...

Training

The winter "rest" period is over and Training courses have begun, although there's been a bit of a false start with limited bookings and rain cancelling the first couple of tasters. We've established a partnership with the Clwydian Hills AONB (based from Loggerheads) which has seen an expansion in the programme and the basing of all our north east Courses this year within the AONB, mostly on Moel Famau but also visiting Moel Findeg and Necrwy Forest where we hope to establish a permanent examination site in due course. The partnership has led to considerable media interest, Chronicle, Free Press and leader have all had pieces. There's been a couple of web based bits on Denbigh Council's site and on BBC North East Wales, try either: http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/northeastwales/hi/people_and_places/nature/n: or <http://bit.ly/clrPgD> to read a good interview with David Shiel, Clwydian range Countryside Officer and Richard... and listen to the delight of Richard explaining walling! There should also be some feature piece in the Free Press in due course. Getting the North West press involved is proving a little more problematic and Anglesey AONB are offering free courses which have received coverage, so it might be a scant year in this corner.

Don't forget this year all members are welcome to book on any taster day/training day as a practice meet. The £20 is refundable when you attend, if the courses are undersubscribed you take full part, if there are lots of people than the paying public will take priority, on training weekends it is possible that Sundays only will be available, we'll have to see how it goes. Generally the idea is that you can practice and receive informal instruction and advice. This is an experiment so "use it or lose it".

Following last years successful event we will be holding a BBQ/training course/practice meet/guided walks at Blaen y Nant. Early planning has literally been a moveable feast as we initially moved it to earlier in the year, the Snowdonia Society then moved their competition date so it clashed, and so the BBQ has now settled on 17th July.

This year sees the incorporation of Clawdd (stone faced earth banks) courses into the programme, 2 at weekends, one midweek, these will cover the traditional Welsh pattern where the stones are coursed and set on edge (like coping).

We have programmed in another certification day (with a practice/orientation weekend) this year for October. We now need interested parties to sign up/indicate an interest as a minimum of 6 candidates are required before we can hold a test.

Thanks to a generous donation from Christine Vasey in memory of her father Pyrs Robers a founder member of the Branch and Master Craftsman, we were able to convert the CCW grant aided training

leaflet from an in house black and white production to multi-coloured glossy affair. Stuck at the printers at the moment.

Other Branches

Sean and Gareth will be joining the South Wales Branch for a day at their demonstration at the Royal Welsh Show. This is the first in what we hope will be a number of joint events as we re-establish closer working links with "the South". We'd like to attend their competition at Vaynor Show on 7th August. This would mean travelling down to the Merthyr area on the Friday evening staying overnight (£20-30) and coming back on the Saturday evening. We can pool vehicles or hire a minibus. Please indicate an interest a.s.a.p. Hopefully some of their Branch will be coming up for one of the Clawdd courses, if they do we'll be adding another social event to the calendar.

We are also hoping to have a joint event with Cheshire Branch at some point. I'm busy negotiating the addition of an extra month to the summer with the powers that be in order to fit it in! Hopefully near Llanrhaedr y m. Watch this space.

International Congress

The Dry Stone Walling Association is pleased to be hosting the 2010 International Dry Stone Walling Congress, taking place on 4-6 September 2010 at the University of Cumbria campus at Ambleside. This is the first time this biennial event has been held in the UK. Details of the event will be added to the DSWA Website as they develop. The event is held jointly with Société Scientifique Internationale pour l'étude pluridisciplinaire de la Pierre Sèche (International scientific society for dry stone interdisciplinary study) S.P.S. their website <http://www.pierreseche-international.org/> includes information on past Congresses.

The theme of the congress is "dry stone walls as part of the cultural landscape". The list of speakers should be sorted some time in May. Apart from the talks/presentations there will be information stands/displays and a choice of 3 site visits over 2 half days (so you can choose 2 of the 3).

Conference fees for DSWA members are £40/day or £100 3 days. Non members £50/£120 respectively. Accommodation is available on or close to the campus. Room rates vary depending on single/twin, en suite or not, breakfast or not. Cheapest from £22.50 pp per night (up to £45).

Accommodation and conference booking forms are available at <http://www.dswa.org.uk/International-Congress-2010-g.asp>. Let me know if you wish to go and we might be able to pool transport.

Miscellaneous

Apart from gadding about in California I've also given talks in Prenteg (Film Club) and Caernarfon (Rotary Club). I can give talks on the Branch, Walling in general, Walling treasures, Quarry structures etc. We just need invitations. The CCW grant means we can so now PUT THE WORD OUT!! We are working closely with The Snowdonia Society on the organisation of their competition this year. Its moved date and venue to coincide with a national Trust farm open day. Now at Hafod y Llan (Nant Gwynant), on Sunday 13th June. It's a good wall and good location. Drop in!

Due to the congress clashing with the Cerrig Competition this year we will be in Nant Peris at their Fair, two weeks later than usual (18th September) see you ALL there!

Begging

Following last years CCW grant this year we have been provisionally offered funding to expand the public awareness application to include a standards promotion. We should be able to produce banners, widen the photo library and display materials, get a new tent and produce two (bilingual) guides, booklets rather than leaflets, on standards, one on Cloddiau and a longer one on Dry Stone Walls. With the way grants work we are able to offset some conceptual labour costs. Last year we spent around £1100 and received £800 in grant aid, net cost £300. We can make a little cash go a long way. This year we need to raise well over £1000 towards the project (I'm still sorting the application), the competition costs up to £1000 too...

We offer all sorts of packages with various credits, £50/£100 or more (or less). Individuals can sponsor our work generally or competitions or even "Stonechat" credit depends on the level of sponsorship. If you suggested one business contact/company/shop they deal with personally and gave me the details I'd be happy to follow up. If every member suggested one contact we could be well on the way to our target...

Now to the nub I don't like begging from members – except to get the odd professional to help with sponsorship of the amateurs and novices at the competition. Now is different. In addition to asking for money for the 'Terry fund' – please give generously – I want LOADSAMONEY and I want it NOW!! If every member/supporter gave £10-£20 we'd have a chunk of the budget sorted, if a few gave a little more (£50) we'd virtually be there. So just send a cheque to North Wales Branch of DSWA of GB to Colin or myself with a note of what it's for. Thank you. You could of course just not bother, no point feeling guilty, may you sleep the sleep of the just whilst I run around working my wotsits off.
Sean

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Diary

March
10 Branch Meeting. 7.30pm Bryn Tyrch, Capel Curig. Speaker from RSPB on Conwy Reserve
15 Talk to Caernarfon Rotary Club, 6.30pm, Newborough Arms, Bontnewydd
20 North East Taster Day, Moel Famau
20 North West Taster Day, Blaen y Nant, Nant Ffrancon
April
10 North East Taster Day, Moel Famau
17 North West Taster Day, Blaen y Nant, Nant Ffrancon
24-25 North East Training Course, Moel Famau
May
15 North East Taster Day, Moel Findeg
22 North West Taster Day
29-30 Clawdd Course, North West
June
5-6 North East Training Course
13 Snowdonia Society Competition, Hafod y Llan, Nant Gwynant
26 North West Taster Day
26-27 Demonstration Ruthin Medieval and Country Show
July
3 North East Taster Day, Moel Famau
7 Branch Meeting. Saracens Head, Cerrig y Drudion (venue and speaker to be confirmed)
15 Talk to FFWAG, Pensychnant
17 BBQ, Blaen y Nant, Nant Ffrancon
17-18 Training Course, Blaen y Nant, Nant Ffrancon
19-22 Royal Welsh Show
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, Moel Famau
30 Half Day Guided tour, Dorothea Quarry stonework.
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. Guest speaker David Sallery on Mostyn Docks.

Sponsors

The North Wales Branch would like to thank the following for their help in the last 12 months:

Countryside Council for Wales,

SPONSORS

Mr & Mrs Freeman-Attwood (Pennant Estate, Llangynog);
Christine Vasey; Justin Kellet (Anglesey Masonry Ltd., Moelfre)

SUPPORTERS

Morgans of Ruthin; Arwel Huws; Don & Ann Eland