

BRANCH NEWS

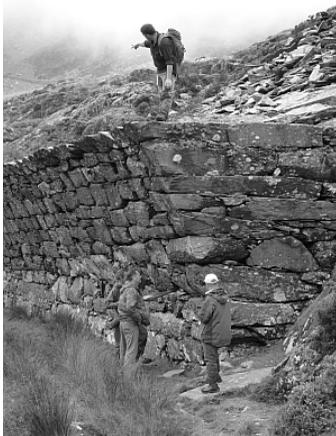
ANN ELAND

It was with sadness that the Branch learned of the passing of Ann Eland on 12th March. Ann was the wife of former Chairman Don Eland, both having continued to support the Branch – particularly the Cerrig competition - despite their having moved to Norfolk. Ann was a forceful personality, had set up the Stepping Stone organisation in London before moving to North Wales, where she had become a lay preacher, learning Welsh in order to be able to deliver her sermons. She also learned the oboe whilst living in Glasfryn/Cerrig. Her support for the branch was primarily actively at Cerrig and in the background through her support of Don. The Branch will be eternally grateful for her having `allowed` him to devote as much time as he did to the Branch. The Branch would not and could not survive without the often invisible contribution of partners of those running the Branch.

Ann was cremated at Magdalen Lawn Cemetery, Yarmouth, on 8th April followed by a moving memorial service at Emmanuel Church, Bungay. The Branch was represented by Sean and made a small donation to Waveney Hospice care and All Hallows Healthcare Trust on behalf of the membership. Members wishing to make a personal contribution should send it c/o Rosedale Funeral Home, 16 Upper Olland Street, Bungay. NR35 1BG.

FIVE GO OFF ON WALLING ADVENTURES

Having completed two of Sean's magical mystery tours I have made a quick "note to self" to next time take:- chest waders; a machete; GPS and; a head torch (for the latter stages as the timetable slips and the light fades). Joking aside, we have seen some fascinating and awe inspiring walling treasures that make the day job feel like toy walling. First was Dorothea quarry and the magnificent "pyramids." These massive structures are the most amazing part of the quarry but it is riddled with all kinds of buildings and structures and we could only guess for what some of them were used. Nature is reclaiming its own here and the trees are slowly but surely taking over. Undeterred we battled into the undergrowth and discovered an abandoned hotel and the answer to the mystery of Sean's wellies. The ensuing bog snorkelling wasn't heralded on the programme but will make the day one to remember!



Undeterred a few weeks later we met for breakfast just outside Porthmadog. Craig must have been tipped off about the exertions that lay ahead and took on board a good few thousand calories before we headed off for the Gorseddau quarry at the foot of Moel Hebog. This was a spectacularly unsuccessful quarry yielding only 7 tons of product per man-year compared to between 20 and 40 tons for those that got it right. This wasn't for the lack of cash, effort or engineering ingenuity, which is magnificently demonstrated in the overhanging retaining wall that sat over the tramway. The dressing of the stone, the line and batter and the stones themselves (averaging about 10 foot in length at the top) would even impress my wife, who generally glazes over when I try to persuade her of the beauty of walling. We gradually made our way to the top of the quarry and marvelled at the plethora of dressing sheds/waliau

and blast shelters. Alongside the very top waliau lay the waste of slate splitting, looking as if the workers had just left for the weekend rather than finally downing tools nearly 150 years ago.

Next stop was the Tyddyn Isa Slate Quays where we lunched in the old powder house, sheltered from the sudden squall that had blown in. This was just in time, as Craig was looking decidedly peaky having worked off his breakfast banquet. It is hard to believe that



these quays aren't just a few year's old, such was the quality of their construction.

Our final port of call was the Cei Mawr, a 60 odd foot high, 110 yard long wall carrying the Ffestiniog railway across a steep sided valley. We pondered as to how we might measure the quantity of stone in this structure as we mused on its construction and subsequent strengthening in the mid and late nineteenth century. I would like to think that we gave Sean some fresh ideas for this task but if I'm honest.....

Having abandoned our planned game of Railway Russian Roulette along the top of the Cei we picked our way through the fading light back to our vehicles, only briefly delayed by Sean's navigational shortcomings. All in all two fascinating trips but I'm not sure I'll be on the next invitation list. My "leaning smugly on gate" following a successful short cut may have been a tactical blunder!

Colin Brown

Quarry Delving

This year we will be (to steal the title of a book) "Delving in Dinorwic" on Bank Holiday Monday 29th August. Sean will be taking anyone interested on a tour of the Dinorwic Inclines and Australia Terrace and buildings. Some of the structures being visited can be seen in the Dinorwic section of the North Wales Quarry page on www.wallingwonderland.info (note this is the new address of Sean's walling Treasures Project). A booking form is enclosed as an insert or send £20 per person (refundable cheque to `North Wales Branch of GB DSWA`) with a note, to Sean... before the end of July.

Walling Weekends/Barbecues

2 years ago our training weekend and barbecue at Blaen y Nant was a storming success, last year we had to cancel it as only 2 or 3 members signed up. This year we have changed tack and are organising two walling weekends when Branches from the dark recesses beyond the Welsh border (otherwise known as England) will be visiting for the weekend. These will double as practice meets for the Branch, might incorporate taster days for the public, each will include a BBQ on the Saturday. Some of the Cheshire Branch will be popping across the border to join us near the picturesque Pistyll Rhaedr, Llanrhaedr yn Mochnant, for the weekend of 9/10 July. Six weeks later members of the Otley and Yorkshire Dales Branch will be joining us at Plas Derwen, Corwen (20/21 August). Members are welcome to pop in for a few hours or a whole day, and to join either or both of the barbecues (for which there will be a nominal charge). Booking details for the BBQs are included in an insert or just send a cheque payable to `North Wales Branch of GB DSWA` for £5/person/bbq to Sean stating which you'd like to attend, no later than 7 days before the event, thanks.

Standards Promotion

Just as the standards and clwdd booklets were nearing completion the CCW pulled the funding plug as we could not guarantee completing them exactly on schedule. They will appear in due course but having reached writing overload and energy collapse, dotting i's and crossing t's will have to wait and there will be an interregnum before they appear. Unless additional funding can be found they will not be bilingual. They will appear on the website in the very least... yes we have a website-www.dswales.org.uk is up and running but due to the CCWs decision will be English only for the foreseeable future. As part of the project we have assembled a fine array of photos of good and poor work from across Britain (even the world). When energy levels are restored and enthusiasm levels regenerated these will appear within a gallery section of the website.

Training etc

The full list of dates for training is in the diary section....Once again we have received funding from the Clwydian Range AoNB and so are able to continue with our wide range of courses and taster days. Don't forget members can attend any number of these as practice days for the one off refundable fee of £20 (the charge is made as we sometimes have to make arrangements and then people don't turn up...). Richard has taken over running the training side, contact him for further details. Booking forms are available from the training section of the website.

We also have an opportunity to restore part of a single wall at our Pen y Pass Training site this is open to all members and will be an informal training/seminar run in conjunction with a standard course. Again there will be a refundable booking fee for this event. Contact Sean for details on this one.



Branch of Year

We won the small branch category again, with Stonechat again receiving praise as well as the extent and diversity of our programme of events for our members. Just a shame so few attend. Hey ho. Picture shows Sean with trophy (left), Alan Devonport new Chairman (centre) and Mike Bengel (right) from Cumbria – who retained their large Branch trophy.

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Diary

January

13 Presentation "An Idiosyncratic Survey of the Dry stone walls of the British Isles". Stone Foundation, Ventura, California. USA

February

18 Presentation "From the Wailing wall to the Pyramids: The stone structures of the North Wales Slate Industry." Pete's Eats, Llanberis. 7.30pm

March

1 Presentation "From the Wailing wall to the Pyramids: The stone structures of the North Wales Slate Industry." Otley Branch DSWA, Yorkshire

3 Presentation "Inscriptions on the Landscape". Conwy Historical Society, Civic Hall Conwy. 7.30pm

April

9 North East Taster Moel Famau, Mold

16 North West Taster Moel y Ci, Tregarth

30 North East Taster Moel Famau, Mold

May

1 North East Taster Moel Famau, Mold

14/15 North East Training Course, Moel Famau, Mold

21 North West Taster Blaen y Nant, Bethesda

21 Display Greenfield Valley Heritage Park, Holywell

June

4 North East Taster Moel Famau, Mold

12 Snowdonia Society Competition, Hafod y Llan, Beddgelert

25 North West Taster Pen y Pass, Snowdon

25/26 North East Training Course, Moel Famau, Mold

July

9-10 Walling Weekend and BBQ, hosting Cheshire Branch, Llanrhaeddr yn Mochnant.

18-21 Demonstration with South Wales Branch, Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells

23 North East Taster Moel Famau, Mold

23/24 North West Training Course Pen y Pass, Snowdon

23/24 Single skin wall seminar Pen y Pass Snowdon

August

- 6 North East Taster Moel Famau, Mold
13 North West Taster Blaen y Nant, Bethesda
18 Display, Flintshire Show
20/21 North East Training Course, Moel Famau, Mold
20/21 Walling Weekend and BBQ, hosting Otley & Yorkshire dales Branch, Plas Derwen, Corwen
29 Delving in Dinorwig, Guided walk - dry stone features of Dinorwig Quarry Llanberis. Breakfast in Petes eats, Leaving 10am. Full day
September
3 North Wales Open Competition, Sioe Cerrig, Cerrig y Drudion
10/11 North West Training Course, Blaen y Nant, Bethesda
Clawdd course, certification and other events tbc.

Sponsors

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

First Hydro Company, Llanberis. Pete's Eats, Llanberis.
Mr Meirion Pritchard, Ty Isa, Nant Peris

And the following for their support:

Don & Ann Eland; Andrew Kehoe, Kehoe Countryside; Mark Sykes, Mark Sykes Contracting;
Alan Williams, Cefn Du Construction; The National Trust (Carneddau)