

NORTH WALES BRANCH REPORT

Last time my missive ended with a bit of a sing along as the new positivism took hold. I shall strive to continue these enlightened ways and hold Leonard Cohen at bay whilst fully embracing and exploring this positivism.

Summer is the season of training, the vibrancy and enthusiasm of newcomers to the craft rubs off on the old hacks like me. It is an invigorating and refreshing time, especially the rain. Aaah taster days, there is nothing quite as enriching as a group, if you can call two a group, toiling in adversity in the windswept wastes of Nant Ffrancon, unless of course you follow it up a couple of weeks later in the cloud in the Llanberis pass. This time 11 - definitely a group, in fact all from the Snowdonia Society, stout souls. I put the record turnout down to a positive frame of mind, or maybe the fact that they'd never heard of me.



Snowdonia Society Members having enjoyed a taster day In the 'sun-kissed' Llanberis pass

I assume much the same has been happening in the east of our region, except there is an eerie silence, no replies to emails, no information. This is indeed positive as it means no press releases, less work for me, fewer people on future courses, even less work. Positive indeed. So far this year 11 members have renewed, even one of the committee has sent in their subs. It will not be long before I can put my feet up completely. I'm feeling decidedly upbeat.

By the time you've read this we'll have had a first BBQ of the summer. So far only one less booking than last year which is really positive, one is indeed a positive number. Fortunately I had a cunning plan and that one hardy soul will be joined by members of the Cheshire Branch who we've invited over. We have a similar event in August when we shall be joined by members of Otley & Yorkshire Dales. It's apparently easier to get DSWA members to travel 100 miles than it is to get Branch members to go 30. Thinking about it our most active member lives in Chester, which isn't even in Wales.

I am in need of new tin cans and a longer piece of string. I hope to join in the Cheshire shindig, after all I have the BBQ equipment, but no-one has of yet actually told me the details of where the site/wall are beyond the name of the village (Llanrhaedr ym Mochnant, which, however unreal it sounds, I am positive does exist). Another positive is that in what is for us virgin territory, without such details there has been no advance publicity, no chance to encourage locals, to sign up for a taster. How is this positive? Well it means a much less stressful weekend for me. Hmm, should I be positively discouraging those 11 renewals?

Our competition returns to Cerrig y Drudion in September, everyone welcome! In the weeks running up to that, and following last year's success, we have another quarry walk planned for August; there will also be a first single skin wall class/seminar. A rarity around here these walls combine features of Galloway dykes, and stone balancing and basically we shall be making it up as we go along. When I say we... bookings are still in single figures, not quite literally single, that would be depressing, and we are positive. Two's a good number, after all three's a crowd. Now welcome back Leonard and sing after me Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.