

NORTH WALES BRANCH REPORT

I thought that the winter was supposed to be a quiet time for Branches. The reality seems to be one of those swan analogy thingies, all calm on the surface, somewhat frenetic below. I'd prefer not to mention which part of the swan I can see from my position here.

Our AGM was attended by 10 members and 3 others - some sort of modern day record (it does represent a 40% turnout). It must have been the allure of guest speaker Phil Clark from South Wales, former International co-ordinator, former vicar, former waller and still erudite speaker.

Having mentioned in my last missive that our Chairman and Treasurer had launched their own personal membership drive it would seem that having offspring is grounds for resigning I ask you! You'd think people would get their priorities sorted! So come AGM we are minus a treasurer, although the chairman still seems keen to get out of the house! Joking apart, thanks Gwennan for your work over the last few years and helping to hold a very shaky Branch together.

We did however manage to cajole Colin Brown to take up the financial reins. In fact 60% of members attending the AGM ended up on the committee, maybe that's why people dare not risk attending. Colin has spent much of the winter break running round in ever decreasing circles trying to sort out becoming a signatory on the Branch bank account Forms, more forms, returned forms, proof of identity, more proof of identity. The latest they'd like him to pop in with proof of identity! It's not even as if he really looks like a terrorist. It could always be that they've finally twigged that we're an international money laundering operation, just not a very efficient one given a perennial lack of funds. Anyway we're not going through this again, so there's absolutely no way we'll be letting him stand down in the near future.

In 2009 the Branch was lucky to receive a grant from Countryside Council for Wales towards the purchase of new display material, a training leaflet, creation of a photo library and digital projector (which unfortunately sounds like a jumbo jet taking off.) So now the pressure is on to give talks. An excellent article in the North Wales daily newspaper has led to a number of bookings and even more for some mug to do. We've had a provisional offer of an increased grant for next year the main aspects of which you can read elsewhere. Yet more work for some mug...



Whilst we're on photos and talks the Branch has finally gone international (photo), or at least this specific part of it. A sudden invitation to speak about Britain and Ireland's Walling Treasures at the Stone Foundation's Conference in Ventura. Home from home, even the weather. Sunny California my.... If you want to find out how I almost became the first person to be deported for dry stone walling on a beach (Maybe the bank has got the wrong man) you'll need a copy of "Stonechat" (No.20), available as soon as some mug puts it together.

Don't forget "Stonechat" is available for just £5/year, old copies online on the Branch page of DSWA website. Issues 21 & 22 will be covering stone structures, huts and the like.

Cabanes, brochs cleats, and more. Professor Borut Juvanec probably THE leading authority on stone huts will be one contributor.

By the time you read this our training programme and a new partnership with the Clwydian Hills AONB should be in full swing and some mug will be drowning in paperwork.

Sean "muggins" Adcock