

NORTH WALES BRANCH REPORT MARCH 2012

Since we last 'met' a new committee has been elected. 3 brand new officers with Geraint Evans one of those involved in the formation of the Branch almost 30 years ago taking over from Chairman, Craig has at last escaped to the arms of his burgeoning family, although he hasn't been completely freed from the chains of office as he's still on the committee in a 'general' role. A heartfelt thanks to retiring vice chair Richard Jones and his help in keeping the Branch afloat for the last couple of years. I'd like to say we're full of vibrant enthusiasm and optimism, but hey this is North Wales.

The AGM was well attended - about 50% of membership. I have to remind you this amounts to 9 (plus 3 'supporters'), but we had a lively discussion about where we go from here, in fact it (or more accurately I) went on so long there was no time for the planned talk. Anyway we decided to trim back on training, our mainstay as numbers participating have declined dramatically, hopefully fewer events will fill better, time will tell. We plan to run at least 1 if not 2 of our single skin wall seminars following last year's 'success'. We had a couple of national enquiries after the event last year, so if your interested there are some details in the training section of dswales.org.uk.

Last time I mentioned the success of visits from Cheshire and OYD branches. OYD will be attending Corwen again in June and we hope to see Cheshire again at some point. SWEDSWA were going to be coming and a site lined up, but this has fallen by the wayside, so there's walls going spare near Snowdon in addition to accommodation in Corwen if you can make it in May. So secretaries make my day and give me a call. Joint events like this are we think the way to go for ultra small branches such as ours, so go on give us a hand.

An extension of this idea sees the advent of the first Welsh Branch get together. We've talked about this for some time, the Welsh Branches have much in common, not least the ridiculously small memberships - about the same across the principality as a whole as regularly turn up for OYD monthly meetings, and we cover something around 20,000 square kilometres. Wales is bigger than you think, I can get to Scotland in about the same time as it takes to reach my Southern counterpart. So we've arranged to meet to decide how we can progress together, more co-operation, better promotion of the association, and at a venue that is equally awkward for us all to get to - Aberystwyth - about the same time from my house as the W.Yorkshire competition. A communal walling day with hopefully more than a couple of secretaries and the odd chairman (here I mean odd in the South Walian sense) taking part, in conjunction with a free taster day for the public, an evening meal, a mini-forum on the Sunday, interspersed with a talk on some several walling projects in USA (aka Sean's holiday snaps), and I daresay a degree of libation. By the time you read this we'll probably have recovered from the hangovers.

Apart from planning and holidays - in addition to my annual USA jaunt, 2 of our committee have just returned from separate trips to Argentina, must pay well this walling lark - it's been a fairly relaxed winter. Some effort has been expended on getting previously mentioned separate booklets on standards and clawdd construction finished following a generous offer of funding from Gwynedd Council, hopefully at the printers by now, but you can get a sneak preview in the Standards section of the ever increasing dswales.org.uk. So we approach the new season refreshed and in a bouyant mood for once. Bring on the rain and the lonely training days.

Sean Adcock