

Exchanges on Dry Stone Walling Training Techniques and Qualifications and the Development of the Profession

Visit to Arnasco, Italy- hosted by Cooperativa Olivicola di Arnasco 5-10 June 2013

Wednesday 5 June 2013

Arrival at accommodation in Arnasco. An informal welcome meeting at the Cooperativa Olivicola was hosted by the Mayor of Arnasco, Alfredino Gallizia, and the President of the Cooperativa Olivicola, Luciano Gallizia. The importance of the terraced landscapes in the region was highlighted and the need to maintain the walls in this landscape. There was hope for a new future for dry stone walling in the wake of the Leonardo Project, which was an important undertaking for the Cooperativa.

Thursday 6 June 2013

An introductory meeting was given to explain how the Cooperativa came into existence; to help protect the landscape but also to help manage the olive trees and in turn the oil production and other local products. Much of village activity now centres round the Cooperativa, which is central to the village and is "the soul of the place".

Further presentations were given about the style of walling that would be carried out and the geology of the region. There are four different stones in the area:

Calcere di Menosio -pink/grey limestone

Calcere di Rocca Liverna -sedimentary limestone

Radiolarite di Arnasco - rare siliceous sedimentary rocks quarried locally.

Arenaria di Leuso Quarterole - sandstone.

The group then visited the walling site, situated on the side of the main road in to Arnasco. The practical work would focus on rebuilding a section of retaining wall at the edge of an olive grove. Introductions were made to a group of students on a week-long training course. A lively discussion ensued regarding the style of walling being employed, in particular the use of small, gravel-like stones behind the wall for drainage purposes. It was acknowledged that gravel would not normally be used but a shortage of stone had necessitated the action. Some surprise was expressed that the technique had been employed on a training course. Discussions also took place about the batter and style of the retaining wall.



Following lunch, work continued on the walls although there was still some concerns about the style of walling being used which would need to be addressed.

During the afternoon, presentations by the partner coordinators were given to officials from the local Chamber of Commerce and members of the Regional and Provincial Agriculture Departments. The presentations highlighted the importance of establishing recognised qualifications and encouraging young people to take up the craft of dry stone walling as a career. It was hoped that the information would help the local authorities endorse the need for such activity in order to maintain the traditional skills necessary to manage the local landscape.



An early evening guided walk to the Davi Tower, a historical stone tower overlooking Arnasco, was followed by a barbecue at the site, enjoyed by everyone.



Friday 7 June 2013

Issues raised previously about the style of walling and the strength of the walls were addressed with relevant groups prior to the commencement of work, which continued for most of the day. The coordinator meetings scheduled for the day were postponed until later in the week.

Late afternoon saw the group depart for Alassio for a guided tour of the Villa La Pergola (previously known as Villa Hanbury after the English family who had purchased the property in 1875.) The property, which had been abandoned and become very overgrown, was purchased by Antonio Ritchie in 2007 and restored to its former glory, including the gardens which house national collections of wisteria, citrus fruits and agapanthus. There were also a number of exotic trees and shrubs. The estate occupies approximately 12,000 square metres overlooking the town of Alassio.

Following the visit there was a presentation by local dignitaries in the town square of gifts to each of the partner organisations prior to enjoying aperitifs in the late sun. The evening meal was hosted by the Alassio Library restaurant, run as a training centre for students with disabilities. The staff were delighted to have been given the opportunity to host the event.



Saturday 8 June 2013

Work continued on the walling site all morning for trainers and trainees during which time words were added to the glossary that had been started in France last October. There were Coordinators' meetings to discuss the production of the project film and the development of the project website.

Early afternoon there was an opportunity to visit the local museum or have a short tour of the olive oil production facility, which currently produces 100 tonnes of oil per annum, equating to 10,000 litres of oil.

There then followed a series of presentations in the village hall. These included certificates being presented to the students who had attended the week long dry stone walling course in Arnasco, as well as students from Albenga Agricultural College being awarded a prize for their sustainability project. Short presentations were also given by the Leonardo Project Coordinators from France, UK and Spain. A surprise came towards the end of the event when the Leonardo project partners were awarded the Arnasca d'Argento, an award given on behalf of the Arnasco community to people who are helping to make a difference and improve the environment.



The day was rounded off with "dinner under the stars" in Arnasco Square and an evening of dancing and music. This was a very enjoyable event and helped greatly with the social cohesion of the trip, demonstrating the importance of making time for informal networking away from the more formal work environment.



Coordinators' Meeting to discuss the Production of the Project Film

Present: Cathie O'Neill (France), Donatella Murtas (Italy), Alberto Munoz Santos (Spain), Alison Shaw (UK), Julia Rocha (Film Technician - Spain), Alfonso Rodriguez de Austria (Spanish translator)

The meeting began with viewing the short film Julia had produced of the visit to Cumbria in April. This had again captured the atmosphere of the visit and included good shots of work in action, and the landscape. These short films were also useful in defining what should be included in the final project film. Thanks were recorded to Julia for his work so far and for the choice of music accompanying the films.

Links to these films would be used on the Leonardo Project website as well as on the partner websites. It was noted that participants in the films should be willing for them to be shared in this way and authorisation should be obtained by each partner.

Following discussions earlier on in the project, relating to the payment for Julia, all partners had agreed to contribute 1000€. ABPS had therefore drawn up a contract with Julia and would invoice each of the partner organisations for the agreed sum.

It was further agreed that accommodation and food costs incurred by Julia during the project visits should be absorbed by the partners as it was unfair to expect all these costs to be covered by the Spanish partner. It was further agreed that the costs would be reviewed at the end of the project to ensure they had been divided equally. Spain had paid the costs for the Cevennes visit in 2012; Italy would cover the Arnasco costs and DSWA would cover the Andalucía visit costs in October. The costs for the visits in 2014 would be covered by the Parco della Alpi Marittime and ABPS respectively. The cost for the Cumbrian visit would also be reviewed at the end of the project and divided up accordingly. The travel costs for the remaining visits would be paid by the Spanish partner in the first instance, with a view to the costs being divided equally at the end of the project.

Coordinators' meeting to discuss the Project Website (NTIC Tool)

Present: Cathie O'Neill (France), Donatella Murtas (Italy), Alberto Munoz Santos (Spain), Alison Shaw (UK), Julia Rocha (Film Technician - Spain), Alfonso Rodriguez de Austria (Spanish translator)

Cathie presented the draft website she had created for the project. During discussions, the following points were noted.

- The site would contain a summary of the project as well as a short summary about each of the partners.
- For each of the visits there would be a summary report and the link to the short films produced by Julia. The meeting reports from each visit would not be included on the website as these were internal documents for the partners.
- A glossary page and bibliography page would also be created.
- A section for contemporary work would be created and would feature walls from each of the visits, eg the Cortes walls from France, the work Andrew Loudon had done on the Isle of Skye. The other partners should give some thought as to what could be included from their region/country.
- The site format should be checked to ensure it complies with disability discrimination legislation, particularly in terms of the visual ease of reading the information.
- Site content will continue to be maintained by Cathie, certainly for the time being but that may change in due course.
- There should be a "notice board" section where training and work opportunities could be posted.
- Logos for each of the partners would be required for the site and should be forwarded to Cathie, if not already done so.

Further work would be done on the site ahead of the next project visit in October. Thanks were recorded to Cathie for the work achieved to date.

Sunday 9 June 2013

The trainers and trainees continued to work on the wall, having also started a second section of wall. During this time a Coordinators' meeting about "benchmarking" was held.

A debrief meeting took place after lunch during which time there was some lively discussion about the work that had been carried out. The following points were noted.

- Wallers must try to accept and respect the different guidelines and style of walling when working in different countries.
- Stone should not necessarily be overly worked and the wall should be strong in construction.
- It is important to take the opportunity to learn new skills and be open to different styles of walling which may have developed in response to the climate or conditions of the specific place.
- The biodiversity of an area may also affect the way in which walls are constructed.



Thanks were recorded to the group on behalf of the project coordinators for the help in achieving, and completing, the work. The wall would be referred to as the "Leonardo Wall".

Questionnaires were handed to all participants for completion.

Colleagues from Spain left for home.

Coordinators' meeting to discuss the Benchmark Training Progress

Present: Cathie O'Neill (France), Donatella Murtas (Italy), Alberto Munoz Santos (Spain), Alison Shaw (UK), Julia Rocha (Film Technician - Spain), Alfonso Rodriguez de Austria (Spanish translator)

An update from each partner was given in relation to progress on training programmes.

Andalusia: Lots of work had been done in relation to the 5-day long courses they were hoping to run later in the year. The course format already developed by ABPS had been used as a guideline for the course content but there would also be a greater emphasis placed on the landscape and environmental context of the walls. An outline of the proposed course was discussed and a few minor suggestions were made by the other partners in terms of course content and structure, which were gratefully received. There were plans to develop an interpretation centre with a dry stone walling theme. Such centres, focussing on other themes, already exist and it was also hoped to link in to the tourism industry by developing walling themed guided walks or trails of varying lengths. Work had also been carried out on researching existing qualifications that exist and how dry stone walling courses could perhaps be fitted in to some of these courses. There is already a training school of walling in Majorca and it was hoped that the two groups could work together to develop a national qualification. Alberto was congratulated on the work they had done so far.

DSWA: Unfortunately plans had not moved forward as hoped in terms of establishing residential courses as the funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund had not been successful. However, the application was being reworked and would be resubmitted as a regional programme. It was hoped that progress would be made and a further report given in October.

Arnasco: Work was on-going to improve the existing 5-day courses that are currently being offered and feedback from the Leonardo visit would help with this process. Students on the courses pay 100€ each, from which the tutors are paid. The stone is provided by the municipality.

ABPS: An update was given on the work being undertaken to establish the next level of qualification in France. Plans are in place for an experimental test to take place in October, when assessors from France as well as two Master Craftsmen from the DSWA will see if the evaluation criteria proved suitable. If so, the qualification will be presented to the French authorities in 2014.

A brief discussion took place about the mid-term reports that had to be submitted as part of the Leonardo Project. France, Spain and the UK were required to send this information in by the end of June; Italy had until September to submit the report. Cathie also had an additional report to complete as the overall coordinator. **It was agreed that Alison would draft a summary report that partners could use to describe the activities to date.**

Conclusion

Another very successful project visit and thanks were extended to Donatella and her colleagues for the hard work put into arranging the events. There were clear areas developing from these visits which included:

- The importance of linking the walls to the surrounding landscape and the heritage value.
- Ensuring the training delivered is of a high quality, demonstrating best practice for each project.
- Taking into account the biodiversity of walls.



Monday 10 June 2013

DSWA members left for home. Colleagues from France and Italy made the journey to visit the Carrera marble quarry on Monday afternoon, followed by a visit to a specialist stone mason shop at Pietrasanta on Tuesday morning and the Cinque Terra on Tuesday afternoon.

Date of Next Event

Andalusia in October 2013, hosted by Asociacion andaluza para el foment y conservacion de la piedra seca.

The participants in the Leonardo project are:

Country	Partner	Participants
France	Artisans Bâtisseurs en Pierres Sèches (ABPS)	8
Italy	Cooperativa Olivicola di Arnasco (including Trentino observer)	11
Italy	Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime	4
Spain	Asociacion andaluza para el fomento y conservacion de la piedra seca	7
United Kingdom	Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA)	7

Alison Shaw, DSWA Coordinator
June 2013

dswa/internat/leonardo june 2013

