

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

Visit to Andalusia, Spain – hosted by AAFCS 7-12 October 2013

Sunday 6 October 2013

Delegates travelled to Seville and enjoyed an informal evening meal followed by a guided walk round the historical Santa Cruz area of the city.

Monday 7 October 2013

A morning conference, held at the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage (IAPH), had been arranged by AAFCS to present the Leonardo Project to local organisations. Representatives from the Andanatura Foundation, the IAPH, the Landscape Studies Centre and regional agencies were also present. A small display of dry stone walls and features was on show and a number of leaflets and booklets were readily available.

Following a short introduction, presentations by the local authority were given, highlighting the importance of dry stone architecture in the Andalusian landscape. There was also detailed reference to the importance of the link between the cultural and natural heritage and the link between dry stone walls and the landscape in which they are found. Delegates were reminded of the relationship between man and stone, whether in the use of relatively small stones for building walls and houses or the large symbolic stones found throughout religion. It was noted that dry stone walling had, in the past, been sold to build houses but there was now a reverse in the situation and dry stone walls were starting to be included in landscape character documents, which was encouraging. It was hoped that the Leonardo visit would help promote the importance of dry stone walls within the landscape.

The Government was keen to protect and preserve the natural heritage of the region but this did not mean the area could not develop and companies were being offered help with economic management, including socio-economic measures and training to help people working in the natural environment.

Thanks were recorded to the Leonardo project for including Andalusia in the initiative, which it was hoped would help raise the awareness and importance of dry stone walling.

Short presentations by the Leonardo partners were then given, highlighting the different dry stone walling features found within each respective country as well as identifying the main objectives of the Leonardo Project and how each of the partner countries could learn from one another.



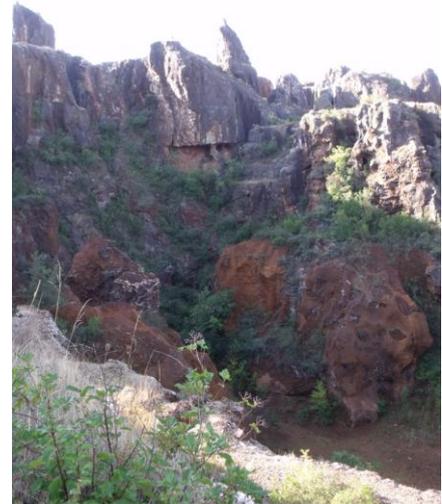
Following the morning conference, the group travelled north through the natural park to Constantina, where the current headquarters of AAFCS is based. Visits were made to various sites of interest that would hopefully form part of an auto route tour, focussing on landscape heritage features, including an old threshing hut. The day concluded with a tour of a ham drying factory.

Tuesday 8 October 2013

The morning was spent on a guided tour of the Cerro del Hierro, an impressive karst limestone landscape originally mined for iron ore. The area had been worked since the Roman times although was at its most productive during the mid-19th to mid-20th century. The last mine closed in 1985. The limestone that contained the iron ore was used in the building trade both locally and in Seville. Erosion has left a dramatic landscape of spires and columns.



Due to the micro-climate of the area, there is a range of indigenous vegetation, found only in the Cerro del Hierro. Cork harvesting also takes place in the area although this is more common in the south of the region.



Following lunch, the group travelled south to Tarifa, a journey of approximately four hours.

Wednesday 9 October

The group assembled at the work site, near Betis, and were given a short briefing of the work to be carried out. There were two buildings to construct; a rectangular one that would eventually house a small interpretation centre and the other a circular animal corral. Wallers were divided into two groups with a mixture of nationalities in each group. Team leaders were identified for each building and the dimensions of the buildings finalised although some concerns were raised that the foundations had not been prepared in advance. Stone had been brought in from a local site but it was soon noted that additional supplies would be needed during the course of the project. A coordinators' meeting was held during the morning.



Lunch was taken at a restaurant a short drive away and work then continued until late afternoon. A short guided walk of the local area identified local styles of walling and historic features of interest, including an old communal bread oven, a pig pen and a traditional homestead.

The wild palm that grows locally used to be used to make hats and shoes but is now a protected species, found only in this area. It was hoped that a self-guided trail leaflet could be produced for visitors to the area.



Coordinators' Meeting

A brief discussion took place about the costs payable for the film. ABPS had made a contract with Julia but each partner was required to contribute the sum of 1000 Euros, which was still outstanding from all partners apart from DSWA.

Further discussion took place on how best to cover the costs of food and accommodation for Julia, which should be split equally between the partners. In the meantime, it was agreed that the partners should pay that part of his costs for the respective visit and any discrepancies would be sorted out at the end of the project to ensure an equal split between all five organisations.

A lively discussion took place about the next two visits within the project, which were primarily for trainers and coordinators and would be shorter in length. It was agreed that four days in total would be ideal; two days travel and two days with meeting and possibly a visit. Structured work programmes were not planned. However, it was noted that there might have to be an additional work programme scheduled for France in 2014 in order to try and ensure the Italian partners were able to use the mobilities identified in the grant application. **Further thought would be given to this by Cathie.**

The next visit to Italy in 2014 was discussed and the dates agreed as 8 - 11 April inclusive. There would probably be between three and four people from each country. The suggested programme was arrive mid-afternoon day 1; day 2 meeting about the benchmark document and the film; day 3 discuss the website and possibly hold a press conference or similar public meeting or visit; day 4 depart mid-afternoon.

Thursday 10 October

One or two issues had arisen on the work site the previous day so there was a general meeting at the start of the day to discuss matters including the availability of tools and stone, the style of building required and refreshments. These issues were addressed and it was noted that it was very useful for AAFPCPS to have such discussions as this was the first time they had organised an event like this and it would be helpful for future events they hoped to run.



Work then continued on both buildings with good progress being made although it was agreed that there would not be enough stone to complete the work.



At the end of the day there was an optional visit to the interpretation centre of El Palomar de la Breña, one of the largest dovecotes in the world housing 10,000 doves during the 18th century, and Faro de Trafalgar, where the Battle of Trafalgar took place in 1805.

A coordinator's meeting took place during the day.

Coordinators' Meeting to discuss the Project Film

The film made during the visit to Arnasco was shown, which followed a similar format to the previous two. There had been some difficulty with the links to these films and **Julia agreed to forward appropriate links to the partners so they could be put on respective websites.**

A draft had been produced of the overall project film, which was very well received. There would be several sections covering aspects such as tools, character of wallers, history of the craft, motivation for the work and the future of dry stone walling. It was also felt that market opportunities should be included. It was suggested that the subtitles should be larger and darker than initially shown. Caution needs to be exercised in terms of the background music used in the film as there may be copyright issues, particularly in Italy and France. It was agreed that the partner logos should be shown at the start and end of the film. A brief discussion took place about the title of the film – one suggestion being "Hooked on Dry Stone Walling". Further ideas welcome.

Thanks were recorded to Julia for his hard work on the film to date.

Friday 11 October

Prior to the start of the day's work, a lively site discussion took place, during which the following points were noted.

- It would have been helpful to have walked round looking at the local walls before building had commenced in order to gain a better understanding of the local style required.
- The different styles of walling found in the different countries was noticeable. It would have been useful to know beforehand what would be expected.
- The site was perhaps not ideal in terms of the number of wallers involved and it might have been better to split into small groups each with an experienced supervisor allocated to each group.
- It would have been useful to have more local wallers involved in the project but it was recognised that AAFCCPS had only been active since 2012 and only has one professional waller who had unfortunately not been able to take part in the visit.

The above points were noted and were gratefully received by AAFCCPS which would take them on board for future projects.

Although it would have been good to complete at least one of the buildings, ideally the round one, it was acknowledged this would not be possible in the remaining time. However, a number of wallers present expressed a keen interest in returning to the site to assist with further work, which was gratefully accepted.

Thanks were recorded to members of AAFCCPS for their hard work in organising what had been a very enjoyable visit.

Work continued until lunchtime. A coordinators' meeting took place before lunch.



After lunch a visit to the beach at Bolonia was enjoyed by the group before a guided tour of the Roman remains at Baelo Claudia, a city founded in the 3rd century BC.

Coordinators' Meeting

The basic webpage has been created but there was nothing further to report at present. The site will initially be in English only but there may be opportunities to translate into other languages at a later date if necessary. The intention was that the glossary and a link to the film would be available on the website.

With regard to the training framework, it was agreed that more work was needed on the basic structure and progression opportunities available within each country. It was further agreed that each partner should give some thought to content in order to report at the next meeting in Italy, so that a draft document can be prepared in advance of the meeting in France later in the year.

In response to a query from Donatella, it might be possible for Italian wallers to visit France in order to gain the French qualification ahead of such qualifications being available in Italy.

The visit to France was suggested as mid-June and would ideally run from a Tuesday to Friday, as per the visit to Italy in April. **It was agreed that Alison would investigate flights from the UK** and let Cathie know as soon as possible.

Conclusion

Thanks were extended to Alberto and his colleagues for organising an enjoyable visit. It was acknowledged that such visits are a very useful way of developing a European network helping to promote dry stone walling in different countries, while at the same time respecting the landscape character and heritage of a place. It was hoped that the Leonardo Project might act as a catalyst for training opportunities in Spain.



Saturday 12 October 2013

Optional visits to Finca La Algaba de Ronda, Palomar de la Breña or Tangier were available to participants who would be travelling home on Sunday.

Date of Next Event

This would take place from 8-11 April 2014, hosted by the Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime. As per the application this would be for trainers and coordinators.

The participants in the Leonardo project are:

Country	Partner	Attendees
France	Artisans Bâisseurs en Pierres Sèches (ABPS)	10
Italy	Cooperativa Olivicola di Arnasco	5
Italy	Parco Naturale delle Alpi Marittime	10
Spain	Asociacion andaluza para el fomento y conservacion de la piedra seca	8
United Kingdom	Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA)	8

Alison Shaw
DSWA Coordinator
December 2013

dswa/internat/leonardo oct2013