



Volunteer Report – Wet weather is not so bad

'On Place Fell recently we found a stream was partially blocked above us - on a hillside covered with gorse bushes. This caused some of the water to flow further down and then along the footpath. With volunteer Steven we pushed through the gorse to clear stones and debris and get the stream flowing where it ought to. It was worth the scratches to see the path dry. You might think this a small victory but it is the sort of thing that gets you out of bed on a cold wet morning.



Left – water above Stonethwaite

It is easy to think of other things you could be doing as you load the car with boots and waterproofs, but I have never been disappointed in the eight years I have been out with Fix the Fells. The work of checking the footpaths, clearing the drains and work parties mixing with the company of other volunteers is a good combination. Mud and water has been a constant companion in my life since early days playing in the dirty river at the back of the gasworks in South London.

Still thinking about wet days, they can be really useful to see where the water actually goes to on the mountains and fell sides – not always where you expect it will be. Depending on use and erosion, popular paths are checked every few months on 'drain runs' where drains are cleared of debris and the pitching kept clear.



Right – working on Grains Ghyll path

The major event in June is the 10th anniversary of the volunteer lengthsman scheme. I suppose we all get used to celebrating or remembering centenaries and bi-centenaries, and so ten years does not seem that long. However a lot of work has been done in that time and we feel it is worth celebrating with a party at NT basecamp combined with three day's work on Tongue Gill near Grasmere. Many people who have helped over the years or who have an interest in the work have been invited and we hope for a good evening.



Left –moving heavy rock

Right – tree planting in Coledale valley



Now for the statistics. As I write this piece eleven weeks into 2017, 499 days have been worked with 137 drain runs completed and 15 work parties. The target for the whole year is 1400 upland days and 400 drain runs so we are well on our way. Work parties include drain building, tree planting and defining the path to exclude excess paths with longer projects starting or continuing on Grains Gill, Far Easedale and Loughrigg.

Now for the next ten years...!'

Christine
Fix the Fells Volunteer
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