



National  
Trust



Upland footpath working  
holiday, St Raven's Edge,  
August 2017

# High Wray Basecamp

Yearbook 2017

The Lakes

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/get-involved/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/get-involved/)

# Welcome to High Wray Basecamp's 2017 yearbook

Nestled in its own private wooded grounds, High Wray is the National Trust's full time volunteer centre in the Lake District. We're proud to be an integral part of the South Lakes property, a gloriously diverse area that covers everything from lakeshore to high fell. Our patch includes famous beauty spots like Tarn Hows and Windermere lake, Beatrix Potter's house Hill Top, an art gallery of her work and even a castle. With 15 working farms and a wonderful network of paths linking all this together that's a lot of land to look after!

That's where we come in. We work on National Trust land and tenant farms and, in partnership with many other organisations, right across the incredible Lake District landscape. With our army of willing volunteers from a huge cross-section of society, we are vital in helping the Trust with its long term goal of improving the health and resilience of the Lakes, and creating a 'better, bigger, and more joined-up' natural environment, where wildlife can thrive. We're enormously grateful for all the help we get from volunteers towards achieving this, but since 1969 our ethos has always been that volunteers should get as much out of this work as we do.

We want people to return home with a warm, tingly feeling – knowing that they've helped to look after this wonderful place, perhaps having learnt some new skills or gained some new found confidence, certainly having had some fun along the way! This yearbook is our way of saying thankyou to everyone, we'd have a

much harder job looking after our area without your help and we look forward to seeing many of you again in 2018!



Find us on:  
**facebook**

Search under 'High Wray Basecamp and Bunkhouse NT' and 'like' our site!

There's not enough room to fit everything into this yearbook so why not keep up with what's happening at High Wray on our Facebook page?

We post regular stories and pictures about the different groups we work with, places we've been and wildlife we've seen as well as those odd little events that just can't be categorised!

Some of the groups who come to High Wray gain recognition of their experiences and their contribution towards the conservation of wild places through the John Muir award. The award can help those who participate to gain a better understanding and appreciation of how their time with us about more than just working and how their contribution fits into the bigger picture. A famous quote from John Muir sums it up: *'When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe'*.

[www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org)

**JOHN  
MUIR  
AWARD** *wild places:*  
DISCOVER  
EXPLORE  
CONSERVE  
SHARE



Tarn Hows



Hill Top



Wray Castle

With such a diverse and interesting area there's always something happening in the South Lakes. Why not try visiting:

<http://beatrixpotterspatch.blogspot.co.uk/>; for the latest from Hill Top.

<http://www.countryside-catchup.blogspot.co.uk/> for weekly reports from our ranger team.

<https://www.facebook.com/NTWrayCastle> for Wray Castle's own Facebook page

# Working holidays



2017 was the 50th anniversary of National Trust working holidays and almost since they began back in 1967 Basecamp has been proud to be involved with them. A good working holiday helps us complete a substantial amount of work while also giving people from all walks of life the chance to learn fascinating skills like hedge-laying, drystone walling or upland path work. On top of this, participants get to make new friends and feel they've played their part in helping look after the beautiful Lake District countryside. After 50 years it is great to see working holidays as popular as ever and we look forward to running them for many years to come!



Want to get involved? Go to <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/working-holidays> to find out how



*'The social aspect has been great, you can imagine keeping in touch with a few people I've met for years into the future because we've just gelled so well. Going to be quite disappointed when we put the last ones on that there's not more to do. The mix of that physical thing and the conversation, I will miss it' 'A very good holiday, the work was well organised and tools up to standard, wardens very knowledgeable'*  
**Working holiday participants**



# The Fix the Fells volunteers

2007-17: 10 years of volunteering



As usual we've worked on a number of sites this year with the super dedicated Fix the Fells volunteers. But 2017 was also 10 years since the beginning of this amazing volunteer scheme. The event was marked with the biggest summer 'blitz' work party yet, with all the upland path teams joining in with us and the volunteers to fix a large part of Wainwright's Coast to Coast route. Basecamp was also honoured to host a special celebration party, with speeches, a poem, a film and even a special cake! With the volunteers an integral and important part of Fix the Fells it was great to properly celebrate this significant milestone—Here's to the next 10 years!



Cake, work site and speeches at Basecamp on the 10 year celebration



Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQZYhqpuoE8> to watch the film



The upland landscapes are surprisingly delicate and with the ever increasing number of visitors Fix the Fells' work to help look after them is more important than ever. The National Trust's four upland path teams tackle much of this but in 2017 Basecamp and volunteer groups once again made a huge contribution to this work - We welcomed back our old friends West Runton to continue the work on Tongue Gill started on the 'blitz', we introduced new group Phoenix Futures to the fells above Wrynose Pass, and, helped by the Fix the Fells volunteers, we gave supporters like the English Lakes Hotels group hands on experience of where their money goes at Red Tarn. All this in addition to the invaluable work on St Ravens Edge and Pike 'o Blisco tackled with our diverse working holidays.

**Want to get involved? To find out more about Fix the Fells go to: <http://www.fixthefells.co.uk>**



This year our working holidays spent their last day on a 'drain run' with the Fix the Fells volunteers. A great way for them to find out more about the work that goes into looking after the paths after they've helped to build them.



*'I have learnt about persevering in the face of continual driving rain, cold, mudslides, working with cold hands under 8" water etc etc and I loved it!' Upland footpath working holiday participant*



# Tarn Hows

Over the years the hugely popular Tarn Hows has lost much of the 'designed landscape' look planned by its creator James Garth Marshall in the 1860s. To restore elements of this the National Trust has a plan to gradually thin dense growths of trees over a number of years, opening up views and revealing some of the rocky knolls identified in the original design. There will also be benefits for biodiversity around the Tarn as removing encroaching trees will help to protect the fragile wetland habitats. Basecamp has been an integral part of this work, with volunteer groups playing an important part in helping look after this beloved place.



*'I undertook tasks I never done in my whole life, tree felling, bonfires to burn the dead wood, clearing areas of the forest and by Tarn Hows. It was an amazing enjoyable experience and lots of hard work however it was fantastic' 'I am in awe of it all. This experience has shown me that if you believe in yourself and challenge yourself anything is possible. If I can stand and cut down a tree, be in charge of the cutting (felling) and the direction it falls, peoples safety, I can and will take on new challenges'* **Mulberry Community Project volunteers**



Go to <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/tarn-hows-and-coniston> to find out more about Tarn Hows

# Hedgelaying



Hedges are an important part of the South Lakes countryside. As well as being an integral part of the character and look of the area, well laid hedges act as barriers and wind breaks for our tenant farmer's stock and valuable habitat and ground cover for wildlife. Laying a hedge also refreshes it, encouraging healthy new growth and preventing the trees from developing poor growth forms due to their close proximity. As part of the Lake District wide sustainable land management project (itself tying into our national 'land, outdoors and nature strategy') all our hedges are part of a long term plan for their maintenance. Which means we have a lot of hedges to lay—but luckily from the Fix the Fells volunteers to working holidays, Chester National Trust volunteers to Kendal college students, we have a lot of eager volunteers to help out!



# Kings of the castle!

The woodland play trail at Wray castle was becoming a victim of it's own success, with the small paths being trampled ever wider by thousands of excited children's feet. This was spoiling the 'secret' feel and wasn't good for the plants growing there either. So Basecamp took on the winter project of defining the paths with log edges and laying fresh surfaces of wood chip, all from forestry work in our own woodland. Many hours of willing volunteer work later and the play trail felt like a new place. The paths were clear and attractive to walk or run along and over the summer the plants on the woodland floor started to grow back in towards the log edges. Give it a few years and the play trail should start to feel like a truly magical place once more!



*'Learnt I am a team player and encourage others and realised how beautiful our countryside is. I've learnt it were the drugs that made me sad in the past, not working in the rain' This week has been a fantastic experience, feel proud to have helped build something worthwhile. Great experience, proud and privileged'*  
**Shardale volunteers**





# Fenced out!

New plantations of trees are often protected by deer fences, to protect the young trees from being eaten. Because trees take so long to grow these fences can be forgotten about, remaining in the woodland long after the trees are way beyond deer munching height. These then become unwanted barriers for people and wildlife as well as cluttering up a woodland with a lot of metal wire. Working with our woodland ranger we have a list of these to remove, helping return our woodlands to healthy, beautiful natural environments.

*'Just being part of it and knowing that you've actually done something, cos when you come you look at it and it's beautiful and you think its automatically like that until you come to Basecamp and you realise what the rangers do and the volunteers do, what goes on'* **Littledale Hall Therapeutic Community volunteer**



South Lakes Conservation group joined forces with students from Ambleside university for a fence removing mega day



# A burning issue ....



After an occurrence of the plant disease *Phytophthora ramorum* in the Larch tree plantation behind Basecamp a huge area was clear felled. It will be replanted, but the ground was covered in a thick layer of branches (brash) left behind when the main stems of the trees were processed for logs. You'd have a hard job planting a tree through this, so we worked to clear the worst of it up with the ever popular technical method of .... lots of big fires. Another example of the Basecamp volunteer army tackling the sort of work that would use up an awful lot of our ranger team's valuable time to do alone. The area will be replanted in early 2018 and we hope some of the same volunteers can help with this too.



*'Realised I'm stronger than I thought mentally and physically. I've had a really good time, done things I never thought I'd do and met people I'd never of thought to talk to back home!' 'I thoroughly enjoyed the 'graft' as rather than just observing nature we became part of it'* **Prince's Trust volunteer**



# There's more!

As ever, 2017 saw us take on plenty of other jobs with the help of volunteers. Whether building a new walkway and tent pads at Low Wray campsite or bashing bracken around young tree plantings, continuing with the path improvements at Blawith Common or removing spruce regen at Nor Moss, helping weed and compost the beds in the Basecamp garden or clearing the arboretum at Fell Foot park there has been no end to the variety of jobs volunteers have turned their hands to.



*'It makes you feel positive and good about yourself and you've actually done something you can show your kids in the future if you bring them, I was part of this, I helped do it'* **Littledale Hall Therapeutic Community volunteer**



## Basecamp staff team 2017



Rob Clarke



Philippa Barber



Matt Tweed

With thanks to Mrs Lumley, the Garratts, the Pendle Forest Association and Di Lang for your support over the years. It means a lot to us!

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wray-castle/features/welcome-to-high-wray-basecamp](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wray-castle/features/welcome-to-high-wray-basecamp)



Acland block

High Wray Basecamp is also available for private hire. Contact us to find out more.

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