

## Dry Stone Walling – January/February 2018

Funded by the ESF Employees Support in Skills programme being delivered in Cumbria, seven delegates embarked on a 6 week, 12 day course in order to develop knowledge, skills and techniques to complete the Lantra approved Level 1 Dry Stone Walling (DSW) course.

Dry stone walls are an important part of the Cumbrian landscape and are used as a way to provide boundary definition. They are called ‘dry stone’ walls as no mortar is used to bind them and yet they remain stable due to the unique way in which they are constructed.

The students were taught by a Dry Stone Walling Association Master Craftsmen and undertook basic walling and repair work, developing practical skills and knowledge required to enhance their future career prospects.

The Level 1 Qualification consisted of three Mandatory units:

- Prepare to Build a Dry Stone Wall
- Build and Pack Dry Stone Walls
- Using Copestones

The students came from a variety of backgrounds, including self employed farm labourers, farm owners, farm employees and horticultural students. They battled the elements to complete the course, often finding themselves faced with snow, wind and rain when on site. Although they used the Newton Rigg College DSW site as a training base, but once key skills were gained they broadened their horizons and got involved in repairing walls around campus. This element of working on campus walls meant their walls will be standing for years to come.

All students found the course useful and will be able to put the knowledge learnt in to practice, be it repairing walls in and around their business or through offering a wider package to clients looking for horticultural expertise.

*‘The dry stone walling course I participated in was very enjoyable. The instruction was of high quality and I will be using the skills I have learnt in my gardening business.’ E. Woodcock*

*‘It was really great to have an opportunity to learn and improve upon this ancient skill. It was also really positive to see people in the college compliment and appreciate our work in the walling area on the campus. Andrew was a really good tutor and favoured a hands on approach and let us have a go, but kept us right, an all round top bloke.’ C. Hunter*



