
4 Great Mell Fell

Theme: Rivers, seas and life

Location

4 Great Mell Fell — Devonian conglomerates. Just north of Brownrigg Farm there is a small pull-in. The walk to the summit is about 2 kilometres [NY 397 254].

Description

Once Britain had rocks called the New Red Sandstone and the Old Red Sandstone; Great Mell Fell is a bit of the old sort.

Because they looked the same (red and mostly sandstones), the Old Red and the New Red used to confuse geologists. Nowadays these rocks and their very different ages are better understood and we call the 'New' Permian-Triassic and the 'Old', Devonian, named after rocks in Devon. We can't be sure about their exact age because there are no fossils in Cumbria's Devonian rocks, but they are thought to be from the younger part, around 380 million years ago, when mountain torrents carried more than 1500 metres thickness of cobbles and sand onto a desert plain. The alluvial fans and braided, gravel-filled channels that these flash floods created have now become a rock called conglomerate. That's what Great Mell Fell and its neighbour Little Mell Fell are made of.

If you hike up Great Mell Fell from the southeast, or hunt around in the stream that flows through the woods, you will find bits of conglomerate, as well as many of their cobbles and stones made of older Lake District rocks. Above the woods, there are larch and pine trees; their bent boughs are testimony to the exposed position of the fell and the strength and persistence of the prevailing westerly wind. But that exposure means the view of the mountains of the Lake District from the summit, and especially of Blencathra, is worth the climb.

Photographs

(Photo 04-1) 4 View southeast over Great Mell Fell.

(Photo 04-2) 4 Great Mell Fell.



(Photo 04-1) View southeast over Great Mell Fell.



(Photo 04-2) Great Mell Fell.