
35 Gelt Linn

Theme: Climate and landscape change

Location

The nearest place is Slaggyford, but it's quite a hike to the waterfall [NY 639 502] and even further to the channel [NY 632 503], (about 12 kilometres and 16 kilometres round trips).

Description

High in the northern Pennines above Slaggyford is a fossil waterfall and steep valley, cut when there were melting ice sheets covering all northern England and huge torrents of water flowed under the ice and across the Pennine hills.

The last ice sheets were at their maximum around 25,000 years ago and then, over 10,000 years or so, started to melt away. The little stream, the Gelt Burn, that now flows in the valley and in a narrow slot gorge over the waterfall, is called a "misfit". That's because such a deep valley and big waterfall must have been cut by much more water than flows down them now.

The valley ("Butt Hill Channel") is here because it is one of the lowest points in between the Vale of Eden in the west and the South Tyne valley. The Vale of Eden was under an ice sheet more than a kilometre thick. Vast amounts of water under that ice needed to escape, so it flowed eastwards eroding a channel. We know the water was under the ice and under pressure because the channel sometimes runs uphill.

These are managed grouse moors so you will see grouse and in the spring and summer curlews, lapwings and golden plover. If you are lucky you may see short eared owls hunting across the heather.

Photographs

(Photo 35-1) Above Gelt Linn, a fossil waterfall and steep valley, cut by melting ice sheets.

(Photo 35-2) The fossil waterfall and slot gorge at Gelt Linn.



(Photo 35-1) Above Gelt Linn, a fossi waterfal and steep valley, cut by melting ice sheets.



(Photo 35-2) The fossil waterfall and slot gorge at Gelt Linn.