



Fell Ponies

Cumbria's best-kept secret

<http://www.fellponysociety.org.uk>

What is a Fell Pony?

Fell Ponies are the native pony breed of North-West England. They are among the hardiest of all Britain's ponies, intelligent, active, easy to keep, and long-lived.

They are strong and clever and make good all-round ponies for both adults and children.

A Worker and a Friend

These ponies turn their hooves to many tasks, including riding, jumping and games. They help with forestry work and provide therapy for disabled people.

They do well under saddle in dressage, show jumping and long distance rides as well as being excellent driving ponies for pleasure and competition.

Fell ponies have worked several times in recent years carrying equipment for footpath repairs high in the Lake District fells.



See Fell Ponies

- ◆ in trekking centres and riding schools
- ◆ at agricultural shows during the summer
- ◆ at the Fell Pony Society Breed Shows at Dalemain, near Penrith, Cumbria (2nd Saturday in May and 2nd Saturday in August)
- ◆ on farms
- ◆ and if you are lucky (and energetic) on open fell land in the Lake District, Cumbria, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, Northumberland, Co. Durham and Southern Scotland.

Leaflet funded by **Lakes & Dales**
co-operative



Join the Fell Pony Society

The Fell Pony Society, Bank House, Boroughgate, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria CA16 6XF.

<http://www.fellponysociety.org.uk>

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Registered charity Number 1104945.

Company Limited by Guarantee 3233346

1623: Sold in open market at Appleby by John Teppin of Castle Sewerby in the County of Cumberland, yeoman, to Peter Taylor of Dufton in the Co. of Westmorland - one little mayre coullor blacke bay. xxxiij s iij d

The Fell Pony Society
Patron: Her Majesty The Queen



History

Fell ponies have carried our country's agricultural and industrial history on their backs. As pack-ponies they transported goods of all kinds, foodstuffs, pottery or wool, limestone, lead ore, slate or coal; a "train" of pack ponies travelling at an energetic, tireless walk could do the 500 mile round-trip from northern England to London and back within a month.

These strong, nimble ponies were used everywhere, from city streets to coal mines, and of course by farmers to travel about and to tend their stock on the high fells.

Sir Walter Gilbey wrote in 1903: "... for many generations the Fell-side farmers in the district have been noted for their ponies; they bred them to the best Fell pony stallions, most of which were trained trotters of great speed."

Spot a Fell Pony!

Fell ponies can only be black, grey, dark brown or bay. Some of them have a small star on their forehead, or a bit of white on their hind feet. Fell ponies have bright eyes, small ears, and long, silky manes and tails to protect them from bad weather out on the fell. They are sturdy and round-ribbed with strong legs and hindquarters—"a bottom like a cook!"—and they have "feather", fine hair that drapes over their feet. Their hooves are dark-grey and so hard that, unless they are doing a lot of road work, they can go unshod 365 days a year. The largest ponies are up to 14 hands high at the shoulder (143cm), while the average is around 13.2hh (138cm). They are naturally well balanced, lifting their feet actively, as they have evolved to do over the rough grazing of the fell country. They are versatile and honest ponies who like nothing better than an interesting day's work with people.

Environment

There are still a few herds that are managed in the traditional way. They live out all year on the high, open fell land that gives the breed its name. These "semi-feral" herds are mainly seen at the outer edges of the Lake District, eg on the Howgills and the western slopes of the Pennines.

Fell ponies are survivors, well used to fending for themselves. Their ability to graze habitats into a "mosaic" is a small but important ingredient in the conservation of the wild flowers, birds and other fauna which attract visitors to the northern landscape.

If you buy or use a Fell pony you are helping to give the farmers who manage the fell country a sustainable future.

The Fell pony is recognised as a Category 4 Rare Breed by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

