

What will I see?

Allenheads is a village in the North Pennines AONB and is in a European GeoPark. The lead workings are underground but, in the village, and the surrounding countryside, evidence of lead mining and smelting is everywhere, from buildings, to capped old shafts, waste dumps and reservoirs.

How old is it?

The veins which contain the lead originate from the injection of mineral-rich fluids 290 million years ago.

Did you know?

It may seem a quiet place now but in the 18th and 19th centuries Allenheads was a busy and thriving lead mining and smelting centre, **producing more lead than any other place in the region.**

Why it is here?

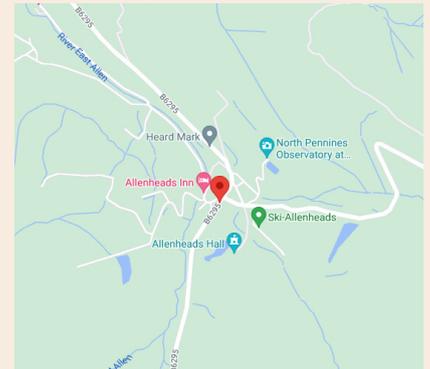
Allenheads owes its existence to the lead mining and smelting industry. It sits at over 400 metres in the Northern Pennines and is a settlement dragged high by mining, and because so many of the miners were small-holding miner-farmers, land reclamation took place to unprecedented heights. Lead and other minerals, like fluorspar and quartz, were once hot fluids which originated deep underground. They cooled and crystallised out in cracks and crevices in the surrounding Carboniferous rocks, becoming veins in the limestones and sandstones.

And wildlife?

The mine wastes contain lead, zinc and cadmium which are toxic to most plants. But spring sandwort, mountain pansy and Pyrenean scurvy-grass have a genetic tolerance to these elements, and are abundant on some of the former mining sites, although uncommon elsewhere.

Where is it?

Allenheads is high in the north Pennines. There is a car park in the centre of the village [NY860 454], next to an information centre, café and pub.



Want to know more?

- Geotrail
- Geodiversity
- NNP Geodiversity Audit
- Onshore GeoIndex
- iGeology
- Geological history of Northumbria

