



Northumberland
Wildlife Trust

Gelt Linn & Butt Hill channel



What will I see?

A fossil waterfall and steep valley (channel), cut when there were ice sheets covering all northern England and huge torrents of meltwater flowed under the ice and across the Pennine hills.

How old is it?

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 channel and waterfall were eroded in that period.

Did you know?

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 it’s obvious that such a deep valley and big waterfall must have been cut by much more water than now flows down them.

Why it is here?

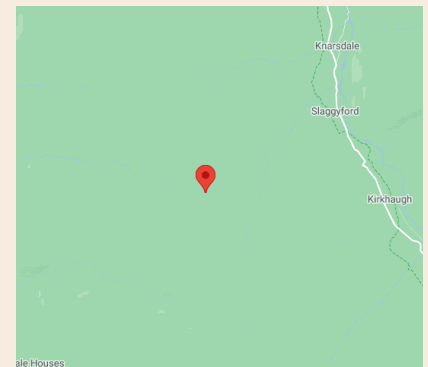
The valley (“Butt Hill Channel”) is here because it is one of the lowest points in the Northern Pennines between the Vale of Eden in the west and the South Tyne valley. The Vale of Eden was under an ice sheet more than a kilometre thick and vast amounts of water under that ice needed to escape, so it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

And wildlife?

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.

Where is it?

The nearest place is Slaggyford, but it’s quite a hike to the waterfall [NY639502] and even further to the channel NY632503], (about 12 kilometres and 16 kilometres round trips). But the scenery and wildlife are worth the hike and you’ll have the valley all to yourself!



Want to know more?

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

