



Broomlee Lough



What will I see?

A limestone pavement: a platform of bare limestone rock cut by fissures, like a very rough set of paving slabs.

How old is it?

The limestone is Carboniferous and called the Oxford Limestone. It is over 320 million years old but the “pavement” feature was mostly created after the last ice sheet left 15,000 years ago.

Did you know?

This is a very rare feature for Northumberland. There are many limestone pavements in the Yorkshire Dales and in south Cumbria but not in our county.

Why it is here?

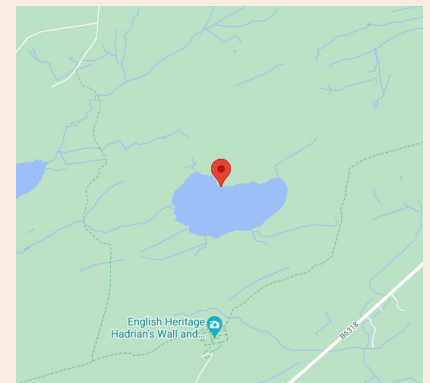
It happens when an ice sheet scrapes off all the soil and loose rock and leaves the limestone exposed. That leaves the rock open to the elements. Rain absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and the weak carbonic acid eats into the joints of the limestone, which is mostly made up of calcium carbonate – creating this natural pavement. The blocks are called clints and the fissures are called grikes.

And wildlife?

Limestone pavement is very rare in Northumberland, unlike in the Yorkshire Dales. This fragment supports lime-loving plants such as small scabious, salad burnet, common rock-rose, fairy flax and mouse-ear hawkweed.

Where is it?

On the north shore of Broomlee Lough, which is north of Hadrian's Wall. You can reach it by walking from Housesteads visitor centre. [NZ791698].



Want to know more?

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

