



Fallowfield



What will I see?

A flat outcrop of sandstone with little or no soil or grass covering it. It looks as if it has been scraped clean by a massive road-planing machine. This and the scratches in it make it a very special bit of that sandstone and they help geologists understand what these rocks have experienced.

How old is it?

The sandstone is Carboniferous and is over 320 million years old but the planing and the scratches were made by an ice sheet only around 20,000 years ago.

Did you know?

That the flat surface of the sandstone indicates to geologists that the area was once eroded by a thick fast moving ice sheet. The scratches that glaciers and ice sheets make are called glacial striae. They show the direction of movement - generally west-north-west to east-south-east. Some of the scratches here appear to accentuate sedimentary features in the sandstone.

Why it is here?

This ice sheet was moving quite quickly from Scotland and Cumbria across Northumberland and as it did so it scraped, bulldozed and carried billions of tons of rock, clay and sand with it. Stones and pebbles at the base of the moving ice literally “sand-papered” the bedrock beneath and gouged grooves into it.

And wildlife?

This is pasture land with only a thin soil but look for pineapple weed growing in the joints – it smells like pineapple.

Where is it?

On a footpath just off a minor road south of the Military Road, the B6318 north of Hexham and east of Wall [NY935691].



Want to know more?

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

