



Shaftoe Crags



What will I see?

Wild gritstone crags; a moorland oasis in the middle of gentle, rolling Northumberland countryside. The views from the crags are fantastic, with Simonside to the north, and Hadrian's Wall country to the south.

How old is it?

The gritstones are about 325 million years old from the Carboniferous period.

Did you know?

Like many prominent rocky features these crags have attracted the attention of humankind from stone age times and continue to do so. Look out for overhangs which may once have been rock shelters; the ancient Romano-British settlement at Salter's Nick and the drove road nearby; the Devil's Punch Bowl, a pothole on the crag top which folklore says was filled with wine to celebrate a Blackett wedding; and the Tailor and his Man, a huge split gritstone boulder.

Why it is here?

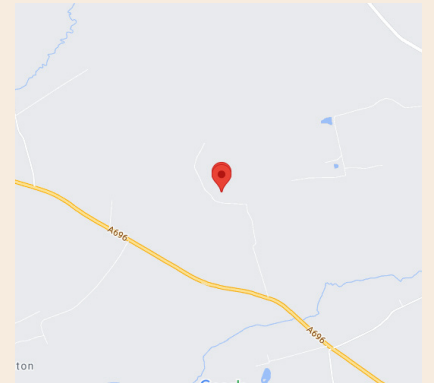
Shaftoe Crags and the crags to the north near Rothley are made of a coarse-grained, pebbly sandstone. They were once sand and pebbles carried in the channel of a large, fast-flowing river; over millions of years the sand and pebbles turned to rock. They are hard and so resist erosion and stand proud and high in the landscape. Some of the sandstone ridges are smoothed and orientated west-east – evidence of the scraping and streamlining by ice sheets.

And wildlife?

The rock faces are rich in ferns: all of brittle bladder-fern, maidenhair spleenwort, lady fern, male fern, black spleenwort, broad buckler-fern and common polypody can be found.

Where is it?

About 3 kilometres to the west of Bolam Lake Country Park [NT053818], where you can park.



Want to know more?

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

