



Drake Stone



What will I see?

A very large and impressive block of sandstone resting on a craggy hillside. There are great views east and north over Harbottle and the Northumberland countryside. As well as being huge the Stone shows the different layers and textures of the sandstone really well.

How old is it?

The Fell Sandstone is around 340 million years old. It's Carboniferous.

Did you know?

There are many legends about the Drake Stone. People used to believe that if they touched it, it cured children of all illnesses and that if you spent the night beside it you would never leave.

Why it is here?

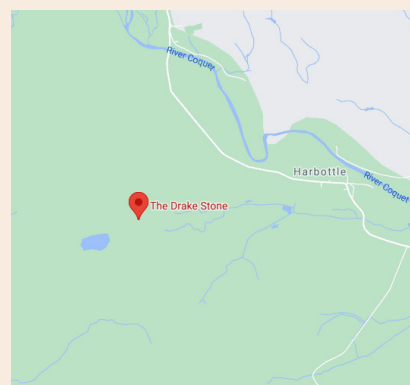
The block is made of the same sandstone (the Fell Sandstone) that is the bedrock all around it and was probably detached from its original position by an ice sheet, but it hasn't moved very far, so it isn't really a glacial erratic. The Fell Sandstone was once sand and pebbles carried down from the north by a very big river – a bit like the Brahmaputra today. The different layers and angles you can see in the sandstone tell geologists that this was a fast flowing river with channels and underwater dunes.

And wildlife?

Harbottle Crags, owned by Forestry England, is a nature reserve of Northumberland Wildlife Trust. On the way up to the Drake Stone you pass by drifts of bog myrtle. The shrub is aromatic, and was used to repel fleas and moths, gave a yellow dye, and flavoured beer. The Drake Stone is set in upland heather heath, with bilberry on the steepest slopes and peat bogs in the depressions.

Where is it?

Just over a kilometre west of the village of Harbottle. There is a 8 kilometre circular walk, produced by Northumberland National Park, starting at the Forestry England car park west of the village.



Want to know more?

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

