



Coquet valley agates



What will I see?

Maybe that should read, “what might I see?” If you like hunting for treasure then you may like to explore the shingle banks of the River Coquet above Alwinton, and search for agates. These beautiful small stones, which geologists call amygdales, contain concentric bands of quartz of different colours. Because of their attractiveness they are often used in jewelry.

How old is it?

The volcanic lavas that the agates were once part of are about 400 million years old and from the Devonian period of Earth’s history.

Did you know?

While the Coquet valley is a good place to look for agates, you could search almost any valley or stream that drains the Cheviot volcanic rocks.

Why it is here?

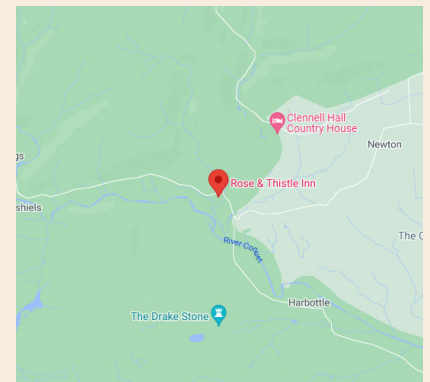
The agates fill cavities in the Cheviot volcanic rocks. These cavities were once gas bubbles – vesicles – that were filled with hot mineral-rich fluids which then slowly cooled and crystallised. They were then “weathered out” of the rock and carried downstream by the river.

And wildlife?

Dippers, common sandpipers and grey herons are common, and oystercatchers breed on the shingle. The volcanic lavas are locally quite rich in calcium, so that lime-loving plants like hairy rock-cress and quaking grass occur on rocky outcrops by the river. There is ashwood near Linbriggs, and you may see feral goats on the nearby hills.

Where is it?

Anywhere upstream of Alwinton [NT921063] where there is public access to the shingle banks beside the river.



Want to know more?

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

