



Northumberland
Wildlife Trust

Simonside



What will I see?

A bold sandstone escarpment, and one of the iconic pieces of the landscape of Northumberland. Its crags and towers look north over Rothbury and towards the Cheviots

How old is it?

This set of rocks is part of the Fell Sandstone. They are Carboniferous and around 335 million years old, but the way the rocks look now – their structure and many textures - is the result of weathering during and after the last glaciation of northern Britain.

Did you know?

That some believe Simonside to have been a sacred mountain to our ancestors who built the cairns and tumuli and carved the rock art at nearby Lordenshaw.

Why it is here?

335 million years ago these sandstones were once sand and pebbles in an enormous river meandering across a broad flood plain from uplands in the distant north. If you can conjure up an image of the braided channels of the modern River Brahmaputra in Bangladesh you won't be far off. Erosion over millions of years has left this hard sandstone ridge standing loftily above the surrounding countryside.

And wildlife?

This mosaic of wet and dry moorland is now mainly covered in heather but there's bilberry and cross leaved heath too and in the bogs are hare's-tail cotton grass and the insect eating plant round-leaved sundew. Waders such as curlews and golden plover breed here, as do kestrels and ravens and the ubiquitous red grouse – this is a landscape managed for the purpose of grouse shooting.

Where is it?

South of Rothbury. You can park at Lordenshaw [NZ052988] and take a look at the rock art there too.



Want to know more?

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

