



Cullernose Point and Bay



What will I see?

A very prominent, rugged cliff tapering out to sea. It is formed from the dolerite of the Whin Sill and has the classic vertical columns and fractures that characterize rocks that were once molten. In the bay to the south are gently folded limestones and sandstones that have been cut by a vertical blade of Whin Sill.

How old is it?

The Whin Sill was injected as a sheet into the 330 million year old Carboniferous limestones and sandstones 295 million years ago.

Did you know?

Cullernose Point is the best place on the Northumberland coast to see the Whin Sill's very distinctive vertical fractures. It's called columnar jointing and the best examples in the British Isles are on the Island of Staffa and the Giants Causeway where the igneous rocks are basalt lava flows.

Why it is here?

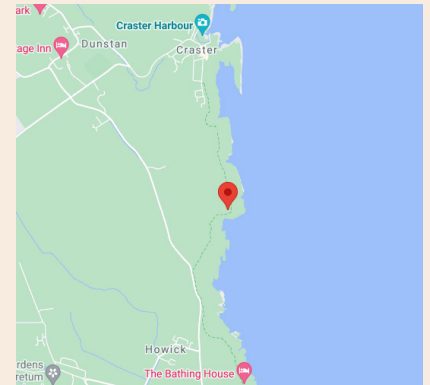
Because billions of tons of molten magma was injected from deep in the Earth into other rocks across many miles of northern England. It cooled from its molten state and then contracted and solidified forming those prominent vertical cracks and fissures. It forms this headland because Whin Sill is extremely hard.

And wildlife?

The salt-tolerant fern sea spleenwort grows on the cliffs, and fulmars nest on ledges. The Point is a good place to watch birds out at sea – gannets are frequently seen.

Where is it?

South of Craster [NU261187].



Want to know more?

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

