



Jesmond Dene



What will I see?

Jesmond Dene, is a wooded valley which carries the Ouseburn. It's now a park within the city, but it hasn't always been like this. As well as corn and flint mills there used to be quarries in the thick sandstone that forms the sides of the dene. Coal was mined here too and there are drifts and shafts in the valley side.

How old is it?

The sandstone and coal are about 315 million years old from the Carboniferous period. The valley was cut mostly directly after the last ice sheet melted 15,000 years ago.

Did you know?

By 1862 much of the land in the dene had been bought up by Lord Armstrong – he of Craggside and the armaments factories - After a lot of blasting of sandstone to create picturesque waterfalls and the Ouseburn, plus ornamental tree planting, he gifted it back to the people of the city in 1883.

Why it is here?

Its steep sides and gorge-like shape show Jesmond Dene was eroded by a significantly more powerful flow of water than the stream that runs along it now. Probably the enormous quantities of water that drained the glacial lakes and melting ice sheets immediately after the last glaciation.

And wildlife?

The many exotic trees and shrubs planted by Lord Armstrong include Wellingtonia (now huge), swamp cypress and a collection of maples. Areas of more natural old oak woodland survive, with a ground flora including ramsons, wood anemone and bluebell. When the city centre was losing its mosses owing to atmospheric pollution, many survived in the shelter of Jesmond Dene.

Where is it?

Just east of the centre of Newcastle and easily reachable on foot or by public transport. [NZ262664]



Want to know more?

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

