



The Spetchells



What will I see?

A wooded mound, a ridge really, almost 1.5 kilometres long, 100 metres wide and 20 metres high. Where the vegetation and soil have been worn away, it's white! The ridge is made of calcium carbonate, the same composition as limestone and chalk – why? Read on!

How old is it?

The ridge dates back to World War 2.

Did you know?

That this is the only piece of “Chalk downland” in Northumberland.

Why it is here?

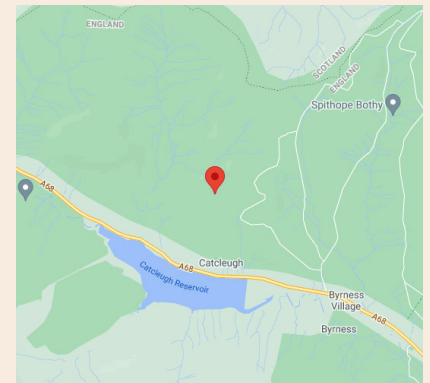
The ridge, known as The Spetchells (the previous name of the local riverside), is man-made, it's made of millions of tons of waste material from a factory in Prudhoe which produced ammonium sulphate for explosives and fertilizer during WW2. It was turfed to disguise the ridge and the factory from German bombers (the trees came later).

And wildlife?

The Spetchells is a special habitat here in Northumberland. It hasn't exactly got a southern chalk grassland flora but rather a mix of lime-loving plants. They include musk-mallow, must thistle, kidney vetch, wild marjoram and traveller's-joy.

Where is it?

Just north of Prudhoe, you can take the train to Prudhoe Station, or park at Tyne Riverside Country Park beside the bridge to Ovingham and take the short walk east. [NZO97641].



Want to know more?

- Tyne Riverside Country Park
- NNP Geodiversity Audit
- Onshore GeoIndex
- iGeology
- Geological history of Northumbria
- Carboniferous rocks

