
5 Jesmond Dene

Theme: Ancient rivers, seas and life

Location

1 kilometre northeast of Newcastle city centre, easily reachable by foot, bus or metro [NZ 262 664].

Description

Jesmond Dene is a wooded valley which carries the Ouseburn. It is 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 were drifts and shafts in the valley side.

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

The sandstone and coal are about 315 million years old from the Carboniferous period, but the valley was cut as the last ice sheet melted 15,000 years ago. Its steep sides and gorge-like shape are evidence that 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 from glacial lakes and melting ice sheets.

Photographs

(Photo 05-1) Jesmond Dene.

(Photo 05-2) Waterfall over sandstone blocks in Jesmond Dene.



(Photo 05-1) Jesmond Dene.



(Photo 05-2) Waterfall over sandstone blocks in Jesmond Dene.