
6 Kielder Stone

Theme: Ancient rivers, seas and life

Location

About a 5 kilometre hike from Deadwater, or a 10 kilometre hike north from Kielder Castle [NT 636 005], both over rough terrain.

Description

On the border between England and Scotland is a huge block of Fell Sandstone that sits in the midst of wild heather moors. In England it's the Kielder Stone, in Scotland it's the Stane. It's a long way from any road and a real challenge to reach.

The layers (beds) in the Stone vary in grainsize and show how sand was originally carried down by a large river whose flow rate was constantly changing. The Stone is a massive piece of sandstone that has been left exposed after millions of years of erosion, particularly by ice during the last glaciation. It is probably not an erratic (a rock transported by glacial ice) as it has not moved very far from its original bedrock position.

The Fell Sandstone is Carboniferous and around 340 million years old. The ice sheets that eroded and may have detached the stone were active around 20,000 years ago.

As with all very large stones the Kielder Stone has many legends and stories associated with it. One, noted by Sir Walter Scott, says that if you go around it withershins (anti-clockwise) three times it will bring bad luck. It is said to be a place where people would meet and families would drop letters during the times of the Border Reivers.

Growing on the Kielder Stone are cowberry, bilberry and crowberry, and on the rock faces, because of the pure air and high humidity, shaggy lichen species. These are declining and rare elsewhere because of air pollution. You may see feral goats in the vicinity.

Photographs

(Photo 06-1) Kielder Stone.

(Photo 06-2) View northeast of the Keilder Stone.



(Photo 06-1) Kielder Stone.



(Photo 06-2) View northeast of the Kielder Stone.