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## 13 Cullernose Point

**Theme:** Volcanoes and molten rock

### Location

Just over 1 kilometre walk south of Craster [NU 260 187].

### Description

Cullernose Point is a very prominent, rugged cliff tapering out to sea. It is composed of dolerite, the extremely hard rock that forms the Whin Sill. In the bay to the south are gently folded limestones and sandstones that have been cut by a separate vertical blade of Whin.

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

295 million years ago when this part of the Earth's crust was being stretched apart, billions of tons of molten magma was injected as a sheet from deep in the Earth into other rocks across many miles of northern England.

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.

### Photographs

(Photo 13-1) In the bay to the south of Cullernose Point gently folded limestones and sandstones have been cut by a separate blade of whin.

(Photo 13-2) The Whin Sill at Cullernose Point with folded limestones in foreground.



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*(Photo 13-2) The Whin Sill at Cullernose Point with folded limestones in foreground.*