
14 Great Standrop

Theme: Volcanoes and molten rock

Location

At the head of the Breamish Valley. Follow the road as far as Hartside Farm. The walk to Great Standrop is a 9 km round trip [NT 943 180].

Description

Great Standrop is a tor: a castle of granite rock standing proud after the rock around it has been weathered and eroded. The views from the top of the tor are panoramic.

The granite is 400 million years old and was formed in the Devonian Period. But the weathering of the rock and its formation as a tor has taken millions of years since, and particularly during the Ice Age — the last 2.6 million years. Tors form because their rock is more resistant to erosion than the immediately surrounding ones. Usually this is because the joints (cracks) which let in the soil water that rots the rock, or breaks it up by frost action, are further apart. Our tors, unlike those on Dartmoor, have been battered by glaciers, so are not quite as prominent.

The moorlands are a mosaic of heather, acidic grassland, bracken and — on higher ground — blanket bog. They are managed for grouse and sheep, and the patchwork burning of the heather is to regenerate young, more nutritious shoots. The blanket bog also has heather, mixed with hair's-tail cotton grass and there are also the bramble-like leaves of cloudberry — a higher-altitude species with orange berries later in the summer. Meadow pipits are the most common birds, and you may see common lizards and adders.

Photographs

(Photo 14-1) Great Standrop.

(Photo 14-2) Great Standrop granite tor from the southeast.



(Photo 14-1) Great Standrop.



(Photo 14-2) Great Standrop granite tor from the southeast.