
44 Hareshaw Dene

Theme: Heritage and mining

Location

You can park in the Northumberland National Park Car Park [NY 841 835]. The walk to the Linn is about 5 kilometres there and back.

Description

Hareshaw Burn is a stream that cascades over many waterfalls in a beautiful wooded valley. There is a well signposted trail and at its northern end is the most famous of the waterfalls — Hareshaw Linn.

But at the southern end of the valley are clues to very different times in the 19th century, when this now peaceful place was the location for iron making on an industrial scale.

The rocks that the stream cuts through are Carboniferous in age; around 335 million years old. They are a series of harder sandstones and limestones and softer shales and siltstones, which erode at different rates and so form waterfalls.

The iron smelting industry exploited ironstone nodules that occurred in the shales in the valley and the other local natural resources of coal, limestone, sandstone, plus water for power. The smelting of iron took place for around a decade in 1840.

The iron working lasted for such a short time here because there was no easy way to transport the finished iron to markets, but also because of the financial problems of the owners. The rail connection to Bellingham arrived just after iron making had stopped, also by then higher quality ore and improved smelting equipment was available elsewhere.

The steep sides of the dene have preserved ancient woodland with special plants like herb Paris, toothwort, wood sanicle and goldilocks buttercup.

Photographs

(Photo 44-1) Hareshaw Dene iron nodules.

(Photo 44-2) Hareshaw Linn, a waterfall over Carboniferous sandstones.



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(Photo 44-2) Hareshaw Linn, a waterfall over Carboniferous sandstones.