County: Northumberland  
Site Name: Hareshaw Dene

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981.

Local Planning Authority: Northumberland National Park  
Tynedale District Council

National Grid Reference: NY 841847  
Area: 19.58 (ha) 48.38 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50 000 80  
1:10 000 NY 88 NW, SW

First Scheduled: 1975*  
Date of Notification: 11.07.1983

Other Information:

1. This woodland, together with Hesleyside Park SSSI, is of national importance and is listed in ‘A Nature Conservation Review’, edited by D. A. Ratcliffe (1977), Cambridge University Press.

2. The woodland is owned by Northumberland County Council and lies in part within the Northumberland National Park, whose management policy for the wood takes account of its nationally important nature conservation interest.

* Under Section 23 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949.

Description:

Hareshaw Dene is a wooded river gorge cut through sandstones of Lower Carboniferous age.

Elm Ulmus glabra and ash Fraxinus excelsior dominate the mixed deciduous woodland developed on base-rich soils on the lower slopes of the gorge, which also includes abundant hazel Corylus avellana and rowan Sorbus aucuparia that have grown from former coppice. There is a rich herb flora, including wood sage Teucrium scorodonia, dog’s mercury Mercurialis perennis and wild raspberry Rubus idaeus with tufted hair-grass Deschampsia cespitosa and opposite-leaved golden saxifrage Chrysosplenium oppositifolium in damper areas. Alder Alnus glutinosa is common along the river banks and in damp areas within the woodland.

Pedunculate oak Quercus robur is developed on the upper slopes of the gorge, on highly acid and well-drained podzol soils, which contrasts with the mixed deciduous woodland on base-rich soils lower down. Woodrush Luzula sylvatica and bracken Pteridium aquilinum dominate the species-poor ground flora, which also includes ling Calluna vulgaris and bilberry Vaccinium myrtillus.
A plantation of mature spruce *Picea abies*, larch *Larix decidua* and some Scot’s pine *Pinus sylvestris* was created above the waterfall in Linn Plantation during the last century, when the present well-marked forest walk was first established.

The rich epiphytic flora within the site includes common polypody fern *Polypodium vulgare* and over fifty species of lichen, which form distinct communities on smooth and rough-barked trees. Lichens characteristic of old woodland (notably *Thelotrema lepadinum* and *Arthonia* spp.) are indicative that the Dene is a remnant of the more extensive woodlands which once grew in this area.