

**County:** North Yorkshire    **Site Name** **Brimham Rocks**

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

**Local Planning Authority:** Harrogate Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SE 212647

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 99      **1:10,000:** SE 26 NW, SW

**Area:** 162.7 (ha) 402 (ac)

**First Notified:** 1958\*

**Date of Revision:** 1984, 1988

**Description:**

Brimham Rocks, near Pateley Bridge, consists of a series of Millstone Grit tors together with a mosaic of upland plant communities including dry and wet heath, birch woodland and acid bog. The tors and the various associated rock weathering forms in Millstone Grit (Upper Carboniferous) make this a classic geomorphological site, significant for studies of past and present weathering processes and their contribution to landscape evolution. The heath and bog habitats represent important examples of plant communities, formerly more widespread, which have been reduced by agricultural improvement, drainage and afforestation.

The areas of open heathland adjacent to the rocks consist primarily of heather *Calluna vulgaris*, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, and wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* with scattered birch *Betula sp.*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and oak *Quercus robur*. Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* occurs around the stacks, and cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* is found on the eastern side of the site. The presence of a population of the uncommon chickweed wintergreen *Trientalis europaea* is of note. On the north-eastern edge birch is regenerating freely in the absence of fires and grazing pressures.

Pockets of wet heath comprise common cotton-grass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, deer grass *Trichophorum cespitosum*, purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, bog mosses *Sphagnum* spp. and cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, and occasionally, cranberry *Vaccinium oxycoccus*. Bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* and marsh violet *Viola palustris* together with water blinks *Montia fontana*, marsh thistle *Cirsium palustre* and wood horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum* occur in a water-logged area associated with a small beck in the south of the site.

Also of note is the occurrence of the local Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus* and Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi* butterflies.

**Other Information:**

1. Part of the site is identified as being of national importance in the Geological Conservation Review.
2. During the 1988 revision the boundary of this site has been amended to include land not Previously notified+.

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

+Under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, 1981.