
28 Bradford Kame

Theme: Climate and landscape change

Location

Bradford Kame is between Bamburgh and Lucker [NU 162 320].

Description

Bradford Kame (or Kaimes) is a striking, sinuous, steep-sided ridge, called an esker, winding north-south across the landscape.

It's about 15 metres high and more than 3 kilometres long and is made mostly of sand and gravel. It's a very important UK scientific site — a Site of Special Scientific Interest — and is one of very few geological features in Britain explicitly named on an Ordnance Survey map.

The ridge was formed around 15,000–20,000 years ago during the last glaciation of Britain. In the last Ice Age all of Scotland and much of northern England, was covered by an ice sheet that was in places almost 1,000 metres thick. When the climate warmed and the ice sheet began melting it left a covering of clay and stones over most of the land. But in some places, where rivers carried meltwater and debris from under, on top of and within the glacier, it left sand and gravel. Sometimes this was deposited in tunnels under the ice (eskers) and sometimes as deltas and fans in lakes next to the ice.

Our planet is currently in a warm period — an interglacial — and were it not for human impact on our climate, in a few tens of thousands of years the glaciers would have certainly returned. We may have deferred the next ice age but there is a price to pay — very different and more immediate climate extremes.

The ridge is difficult to farm so has been left largely to nature, with a tangle of bramble, gorse and bracken, useful for birds such as linnet and song thrush to feed and nest in. But you may also see buzzards, sedge warblers, skylarks, willow warblers, whitethroats and spotted flycatchers.

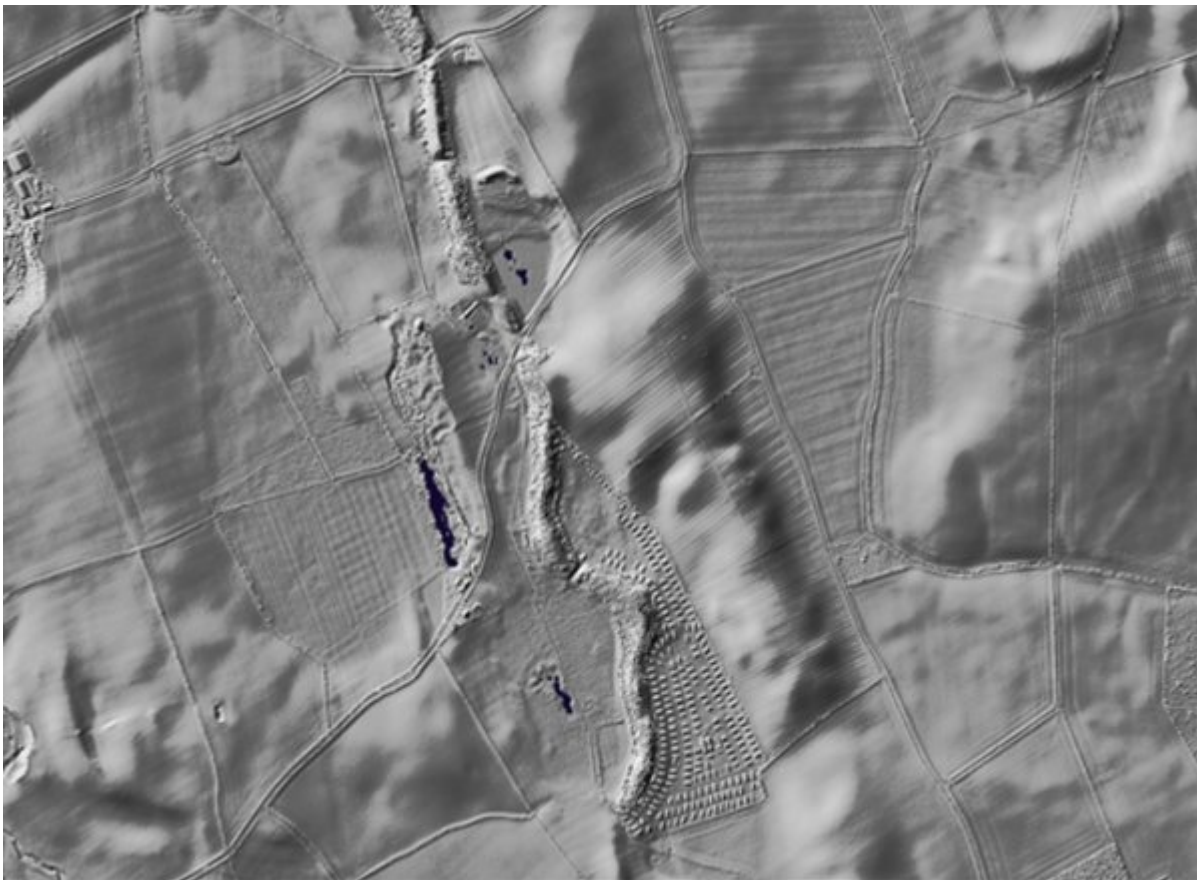
Photographs

(Photo 28-1) Bradford Kame.

(Photo 28-2) A very accurate model of the ground surface showing the Bradford Kame. Lidar Composite Digital Terrain Model at 1m spatial resolution produced by the Environment Agency. Public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.



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