
49 Town Moor

Theme: Heritage and mining

Location

A 2.5 kilometre walk north of Newcastle city centre [NZ 233 663].

Description

In the middle of Newcastle is a huge area of pasture land, much larger than Central Park in New York. What gets the Town Moor and its neighbours, Nuns Moor and Hunters Moor, into this rock book? They are one of the very few places where you can see evidence of the mining of coal in the city whose name is synonymous the world over with coal.

The coal seam mined directly underneath the moor is Carboniferous and around 312 million years old. It is called the High Main seam and is a very thick coal — sometimes exceeding 2 metres. That thickness and the fact that it was so close to the surface made it very attractive to men wishing to mine coal. The mining here may have started as early as the 14th century. In the 18th and 19th centuries mining was extensive by bell pits and then pillar and stall methods. The very uneven surface of Nuns Moor west of Grandstand Road is caused by old coal workings and their collapse — subsidence. As recently as the Second World War, because of the urgent need for fuel and power, over 340,000 square metres of coal was mined by opencast methods in the northern parts of the moors.

The Moor is mainly agricultural grassland, supporting cattle (within mooing distance of St James' Park), and there is also some woodland. Open country birds include skylark, and in winter waders such as golden plover. In the woodland are willow warbler, chiffchaff and blackcap.

Photographs

(Photo 49-1) Town Moor, Newcastle upon Tyne.

(Photo 49-2) A very accurate model showing the uneven ground surface at Cow Hill junction, Town Moor, Newcastle upon Tyne. LiDAR Composite Digital Surface at 1m spatial resolution produced by the Environment Agency. Public sector information licenced under the Open Government Licence v3.0.



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