

Northumberland National Park

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The hillfort is a protected monument and is managed under the terms of an agreement between the Northumberland National Park Authority and the landowner. Under the terms of the agreement, parts of the trail may be closed on a few days each year. Contact 01434 605555 for closure information. Please respect this ancient site and leave the stones as you find them. To protect wildlife and farm animals, please keep your dog on a lead at all times. Thank you.

Rothbury Visitor Centre 01669 620887
 Ingram Visitor Centre 01665 578890
 Traveline 0870 6082608

Allow at least 3 hours to complete this 3.5 mile (5.5km) walk. Some of the walking is strenuous, with a very steep descent, and the top is very exposed in poor weather. Wear good walking boots and take warm waterproof clothing with you.

Please park at the Gefrin monument lay-by or the grass verge indicated on the route map. Useful map: OS 1:25,000 'The Cheviot Hills' (OL16 in the Explorer Series)

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How to reach Yeaving Bell

“We are groping our way through a dark period....the people who lived then had little to leave behind them, and therefore but few relics can be discovered.”

George Tate, the first archaeologist known to have dug at Yeaving Bell in 1862

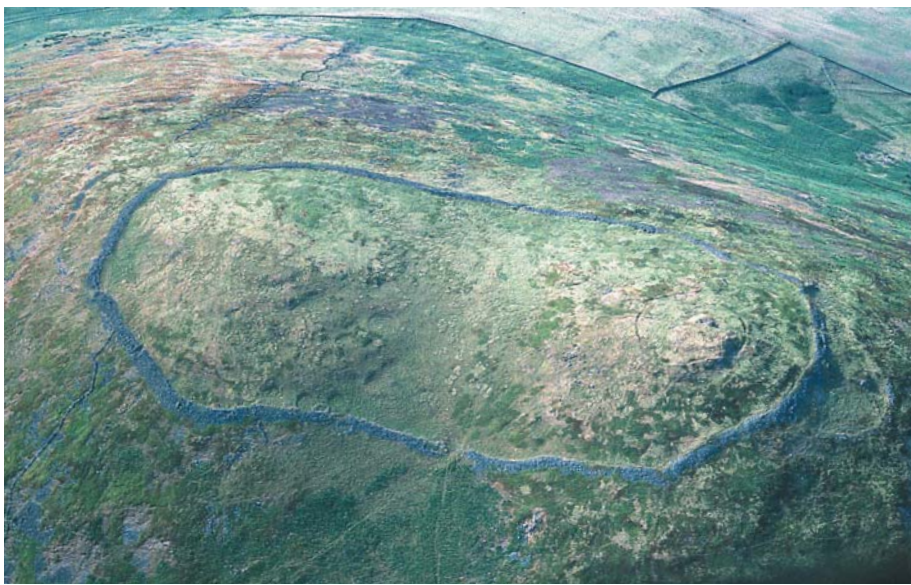


Photo: © Tim Galles.

The mark on the land

This powerful and imposing hill has attracted people for millennia. Over four thousand years ago, Stone Age people aligned a sacred monument to face it. Yeaving Bell was a focus – but for what? And why?

Two thousand years later, other people made this special place their own. They built about 130 roundhouses, protected within a massive stone rampart. Today, this rampart, although tumbled, is still impressive, and closer inspection of the hilltop reveals the platforms where their houses once stood.

This is the largest hillfort in Northumberland, a land rich in hillforts. These high defensible settlements were a feature of Iron Age life. But why were they built? Who did the builders seek protection from? Or was the site as much to do with prestige as protection?



Reconstruction of Yeaving Bell in about 2000BC by ©Eric Delle.

The mark on the mind

This is a place where the length of human history feels accessible and ancient lives can seem tantalisingly close.

Surprisingly few archaeologists have been drawn to Yeaving Bell over the years. However, recent survey work and old excavations have revealed something of the structure of the hillfort and the nature of its buildings.

The fort was probably built about 2500 years ago and was one of the largest Iron Age settlements in northern Britain. But what were the people like?

How did they live? How did they understand this place? Why was it eventually abandoned?