

NOT FAR from the northeast coast of Scotland is a tall, narrow column of rock with a quaint name, the ‘Old Man of Hoy’ (fig. 1). It is a sea stack in the ocean less than 100 m (300 ft) from the cliffs of Hoy, the second largest island of the Orkneys. The ‘Old Man’ stands 137 m (449 ft) tall, the same height as the cliffs and is only 30 m (100 ft) wide at its base. It has been left standing as the ocean has eroded the cliffs.

The cliffs and the sea stack are composed of an attractive reddish-pink sedimentary rock called the Old Red Sandstone. These sediments are nicely explained within a biblical Flood perspective.

Tourists are told that this ‘Old Red Sandstone’ is from the Devonian geologic system and 370 million years old. The Geology Transformation Tool¹ allows us to convert the long-age naturalistic interpretation into a biblical one. From this tool, we see that the sediments would have been deposited as Noah’s Flood was inundating the earth, probably a month or so before it reached its peak and started to recede.

Upheavals of the earth’s crust during the Flood caused the sediments of the Old Red Sandstone to be deposited across a large, low-lying area. Geologists call the area around northeast Scotland and the Orkneys the Orcadian Basin. It extends across Great Britain, Ireland, and Norway. An enormous volume of sediment was deposited in this basin, which includes conglomerate boulders, sandstone, mudstone, and siltstone. In parts of the basin the sediments are more than 4,000 m (13,000 ft) thick.

A pile of horizontal sedimentary layers, or strata, are visible in the sea stack. These are also visible in the steep cliffs. From a distance the strata do not look very big. However, a close view of climbers on the stack (fig. 2) shows that some of the strata are about 1.8 m (6 ft) thick. They

Fig. 1.

The OLD MAN OF HOY



indicate that a great volume of sediment has been carried into the area.

Also, lines, or layers run across the strata indicating large-scale cross-beds. Cross-beds normally indicate the action of moving water. However, when the cross-bedding is large, as here, geologists who do not believe in Noah's Flood automatically interpret the layer as forming in a desert. This is because the alternative would mean a flood of biblical proportions. So 'desert' is what the tourist information for Hoy says. But the beds are consistent with what we would expect during the Flood—deep, fast-flowing water depositing sediment over a large area.

In addition, many fossils have been found in the Old Red Sandstone, including varieties of fish. This is consistent with a watery environment, not a desert one.

Once we know what to look for and can place the geological sequence within biblical history, it is amazing how Noah's Flood explains the evidence we see in the rocks. That affects the way we look at the world and our place in it. ■

References and notes

1. Walker, T., The Geology Transformation Tool, *Creation* 43(2):18–21, 2021; creation.com/geology-transformation-tool.

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Fig. 2.