



Beacon Hill and Godley Cutting, Halifax

STATUS: Local Geological Sites

OTHER DESIGNATIONS:

COUNTY: West Yorkshire

DISTRICT: Calderdale

OS GRID REF. SE 103 252 to 103 259

OS 1:50,000 Landranger 104 Leeds and Bradford

OS 1:25,000 Explorer 288 Bradford and Huddersfield

BGS 1:50,000 Sheet 77 Huddersfield (Solid and Drift)

FIRST DESIGNATED by West Yorkshire RIGS Group in 1996

MOST RECENT SURVEY West Yorkshire Geology Trust January 2009

DESIGNATION SHEET UPDATED August 2009

SITE DESCRIPTION

Beacon Hill forms an escarpment topped by Upper Carboniferous Elland Flags, which are exposed on the footpath near the Beacon. The steep slope which descends into Halifax is made of mudstones, silts and minor sandstones beds, which are generally less resistant to weathering and erosion than the Elland Flags. There are Elland Flag quarries on the top of Beacon Hill. Silts and mudstones are exposed at the north end of Beacon Hill, in a large quarry occupied by various factory buildings. Godley Cutting, which is occupied by the A58 from Halifax to Hipperholme, exposes an excellent sequence of mudstones and silts.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS:

There is a long history of coal mining in the area, with the Lister family of Shibden Hall being the owners of the mines. The south side of Godley Cutting has three adits (tunnels) which exploited the thin coal seams. These are openings into chambers in which pillar and stall mining has taken place. Mudstone has been extracted for brick-making at the north end of Beacon Hill and there is a record in White's Directory 1894 that Swan Bank coal and Brick Company, Bailey Hall Road was operating then. There are some sizable Judd walls on the top of Beacon Hill, which show that sandstone waste has accumulated as a result of quarrying on top of the hill.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE:

This area is suitable for small groups of secondary students or adults to observe Upper Carboniferous sedimentation.

Beacon Hill is a suitable vantage point for observing the geology and landscape of the Halifax district. Access to Godley Cutting should be maintained for research purposes.

AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS:

There are extensive panoramic views to the west towards the Calder valley and north into the Shibden valley.

ACCESS AND SAFETY:

There is a lay-by suitable for a minibus at SE 103 258 (Shibden Hall Road). Exposures in Godley Cutting are best observed from Horley Green Road and Shibden Hall Road

(binoculars are useful). Keep to pavements at all times as minor roads are busy bus routes.