

Shibden Hall and Beacon Hill, Halifax, geological walk Saturday 17th October

We had a bright autumn day for a Calderdale Countryside Services walk to look at the rocks and landscapes around Shibden Dale and Beacon Hill. A small group heard about the local rocks which were formed 315 million years ago in the Carboniferous deltas deposited on a continent which lay close to the equator. The views from the Barrowclough Lane above Shibden Dale show how the West Yorkshire landscape has been shaped by alternating sandstone and mudstone layers. Because coal was also formed at this time, we looked at evidence for old mines in the valley, observing the ventilation furnace, now a scheduled monument, built in the 1830s above Cunnery Wood to ventilate the mine tunnels below.

Godley Cutting, along the A58 close to Shibden Hall, is undergoing engineering works at the moment because sandstone blocks threaten to fall into the road. Mouchel, the engineering company involved, have devised a system which protects the road with steel netting. However, the rock exposures are a Local Geological Site, one of 70 in West Yorkshire, so a section of the cutting has been cleaned up and left clear of netting so that beds of mudstone, sandstone and a coal seam, as well as several coal mine adits, are visible. The company geologist was present to tell us about the complex issues involved in the work and we enjoyed an interesting discussion.



Looking at the Elland Flags exposure on the path from Beacon Hill towards Godley Cutting.



Rocks in Godley Cutting which have been cleared of vegetation and will remain exposed.

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This is the first newsletter in our new format. I hope that it will prove successful in advertising our activities and giving members a taste of the projects that we are involved in.

All our activities are focused on promoting geodiversity in West Yorkshire, which is a part of the country in which geology has played a very important part, in coal mining, stone and gravel quarrying and iron production. The extraction of these materials has contributed to West Yorkshire's engineering and textiles industries and its industrial heritage.

The 70 Local Geological Sites in West Yorkshire have recently been updated and their details can now be seen on the website. Some of the scientific geological information is omitted because of limited space, so further details can be obtained from the contact below.

In 2009 we have run 8 public events, such as Geodays, and 16 guided walks throughout West Yorkshire. Altogether, 640 people have attended our events, which is pleasing for an area which is not in the forefront of geological excitement. For instance, we have no dinosaurs, some unusual but unspectacular fossils and no volcanoes. However, there are plenty of good geological stories to tell in West Yorkshire and that is what we are trying to do.

Alison Tymon

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