



Wood Head Quarries, Hipperholme

STATUS: Local Geological Site

OTHER DESIGNATIONS:

COUNTY: West Yorkshire

DISTRICT: Calderdale

OS GRID REF. SE 118 259

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 February 2008

DESIGNATION SHEET UPDATED August 2009

SITE DESCRIPTION:

There are several old quarries in this site, some of which are very overgrown and have precipitous drops. The main quarry is not overgrown and has an excellent section of the Elland Flag sandstones and siltstones from the Upper Carboniferous Langsettian (Lower Coal Measures) in a 15m high face. The exposure illustrates the fine grained, micaceous nature of the Elland Flags, which allows the stone to be worked for flags, slates and building blocks.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS:

The approach to the quarries is along a flagged quarry track, with evidence of wear by sled runners.

Wood Head Quarries provided building stones for many of the 17th century buildings in Hipperholme and Coley.

There are adits exposed in the lower part of the main quarry face. These were used for the mining of the best flags, which were too deep to be easily quarried from the surface in early times. Mine adits are recorded in the BGS report Mining in the Elland Flags (see reference below) as Woodhead mine at Hipperholme, owned by A. Longbottom and worked from 1904-1905. There is no mention of this quarry in the Huddersfield and Halifax memoir 1930 (details below) so perhaps it was closed by that time.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE:

This site has previously been used for educational purposes by local schools. There is a great variety of rock types, so it is useful for the identification of sedimentary rocks and structures. Evidence of worm burrows and plant fossils can be seen in fallen blocks. The site overlooks the Coal Measures escarpment at Beacon Hill, Halifax. Several benches of Elland Flags can be seen gently dipping to the south east towards Brighouse and beyond to Castle Hill, Huddersfield.

AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS:

The site overlooks the historic Shibden Valley and has views across the Coal Measure landscapes to the Millstone Grit landscapes of the Pennines.

ACCESS AND SAFETY:

There is public parking next to the Grammar School. Access is from a footpath leading off from Kirk Lane.

The quarries are not safe for members of the public. The quarries have unprotected steep rock faces and fallen blocks which maybe unstable. The quarry face should not be approached without hard hats. It is full of rusty cars and other rubbish and many of the slopes are made of quarry spoil which is overgrown and therefore unstable. There is also an unprotected mine adit at the base of the quarry which should not be entered.