

Todmorden Moor

STATUS: Local Geological Site

OTHER DESIGNATIONS:

COUNTY: West Yorkshire

DISTRICT: Calderdale

OS GRID REF. SD 8825, 8925, 9025, 9125, 8924, 9024, 8824, 8923

OS 1:50,000 Landranger 103 Blackburn and Burnley

OS 1:25,000 Explorer OL 21 South Pennines

BGS 1:50,000 Sheet 76 Rochdale

FIRST DESIGNATED by West Yorkshire Geology Trust in 2008

MOST RECENT SURVEY West Yorkshire Geology Trust February 2010

DESIGNATION SHEET UPDATED March 2011



SITE DESCRIPTION:

Todmorden Moor is upland plateau moor with an altitude of about 350 to 400m, reaching a high point of 441m at Carr and Craggs Moor. It lies between Cliviger Gorge to the north and Dulesgate valley to the south, with steep slopes down towards north and east into the Calder valley.

The Moor is cut by five different sandstone beds which run roughly north-south. These are of Upper Carboniferous (Yeadonian and Langsettian) age. The sandstones are exposed in Flower Scar Road and on small exposures on the moorland. There are good exposures in two disused quarries close to the Bacup road (A681).

Between each sandstone bed lie mudstones which contain a total of seven coal seams, which have been extensively worked on the Moor. Mudstones are exposed in some of the small gullies in the moorland, as well as in the spoil tips and along the line of the old tramway.

Many of the spoil tips on the mine yield fossils within carbonate nodules. The coal seams and associated mudstones are an important source of coal balls (nodules containing beautifully preserved plant fossils) which are of great importance in the study of palaeobotany.

The Moor is covered with peat deposits which started to form during the Atlantic climatic period about 7000 to 5000 years ago, when the climate was particularly cold and wet.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS:

There has been very extensive coal mining on the Moor. The sites of at least four mines probably drift and shaft mines, with associated spoil tips, are still visible. Clough Head Colliery, on the site of the present quarry in Dulesgate, mined the Upper Foot Coal and the Lower Mountain Coal seams (called the Half Yard Coal in 1896) as did the nearby Todmorden Moor Colliery at Clough Foot and the colliery at Saunder Clough. An old tramway from Sandy Road Colliery to an unnamed mine to the north has yielded many fossils in nodules from the waste material. At Saunder Clough in Dulesgate there was a fireclay works which produced bricks.

Quarrying of sandstone has also taken place and there is a very large disused quarry at Clough Head on the south side of the Moor in the Milnrow Sandstone. The place name Slate Pit Hill in the west of the area shows that the Dyneley Knoll Flags were extensively worked, including in a large quarry at the western end of Todmorden Moor. A stone

crusher was located at Guide Quarry at the east, which worked the Hazel Greave Grit (Guiseley Grit). Bacup Natural History Society removed the grinding-stone and floor for safe-keeping but the depression in the ground is still visible.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE:

Todmorden Moor is a fascinating site, where exposed rocks can be studied on tracks, in quarries and in the landscape features and is ideal for teaching at A-level standard. Evidence for the coal and fireclay mining history of the Moor is clear, as many mining features are still visible. Quarrying for stone has always been important on the Moor and the two large quarries could be used for teaching geology at all levels, if they were made accessible. The Moor should be used to interpret the industrial heritage and the exploitation of its mineral resources for the general public.

AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS:

Todmorden Moor is in a commanding position on the watershed of the Pennines and has excellent views in all directions. Stoodley Pike and the Calder Valley can be seen towards the east while the view to the west opens out onto the Lancashire plain. The high moors of the Pennines are seen to north and south.

The Moor is covered with peat, moorland grasses and areas of sphagnum bog. There is a line of pylons crossing the southern part of the Moor, running east-west. The Clough Head quarry is abandoned and has become very untidy beyond the TEG composting plant near the road. Flower Scar Road has been prone to fly-tipping, which is now largely confined to the area close to its junction with the A681 at the western end. Rubbish is also tipped at the Sandy Road Colliery spoil tips and cleared by the Local Authority and volunteers.

Some coal mine drifts on the moor have collapsed and have been attended to immediately by the Coal Authority. There are several shafts which have been fenced off with warning notices. There are spoil tips from mining close to the old coal workings.

ACCESS AND SAFETY:

Flower Scar Road, an ancient highway which was used to give access to mines on the moor, runs from Tower Causeway in the east to the A681 near Sharneyford in the west. It is gated at the west end. The moor is Urban Common land and there is a bridleway cutting across from the A681 to Flower Scar Road. Because of subsidence and collapse of old coal workings care must be taken when walking near the old mines. Permission is required to access Clough Head quarries through the TEG composting site, but not if you approach from the moor.