

Boston Spa Riverside Woods



STATUS: Local Geological Site

OTHER DESIGNATIONS:

COUNTY: West Yorkshire

DISTRICT: Leeds

OS GRID REF. SE 423 465 – 430 459

OS 1:50,000 Landranger 105 York and surrounding areas

OS 1:25,000 Explorer 289 Leeds

BGS 1:50,000 Sheet 70 Leeds

FIRST DESIGNATED West Yorkshire Geology Trust February 2010

DATE OF MOST RECENT SURVEY March 2015 by West Yorkshire Geology Trust

DESIGNATION SHEET UPDATED September 2015

SITE DESCRIPTION:

Wooded cliffs on the south-west side of the River Wharfe, upstream of Thorp Arch Bridge, expose several places where Upper Permian Cadeby Formation dolomites (Lower Magnesian Limestone) can be seen. Old quarries at the top of the cliffs include pisoidal, peloidal and ooidal dolostones. Microbial patch reefs draped by bedded dolomites are found lower in the cliffs and form prominent crags, often seen best from the Thorp Arch bank of the river. The patch reefs are typical of the Wetherby Member of the Cadeby Formation. The crags and quarries at the top of the cliffs are difficult to access as the slope above the river is very steep. However, two exposures near the Boston Spa weir can be accessed from the riverside footpath. At the north end of the cliffs, a footpath to the river through Deepdale goes to Jackdaw Crag which is a good example of a patch reef.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS:

Several quarries have been opened up at the top of the cliffs, presumably to extract building stone for use in Boston Spa.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE:

The site is interesting for walkers using the main footpaths. It is not suitable for educational groups, because of the difficult access to crags on steep cliffs.

AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS:

The woods are very attractive and views across the River Wharfe can be seen from the cliff top footpath through the trees.

ACCESS AND SAFETY:

The geology of the river cliffs can be seen best from the eastern bank of the River Wharfe with binoculars, using the footpath from Thorp Arch with permission from Hall Farm, Thorp Arch. Jackdaw Crag, at the foot of Deepdale, is accessible by footpath from Boston Spa and shows many interesting features. There is a footpath running along the top of the cliff in Riverside Woods, from which excellent views across the river can be seen through gaps in the trees. There are no footpaths within the woods that allow access to old quarries and crags. The River Wharfe is deep and fast-flowing and groups should not attempt to climb down through the woods.