



Mill Hill Road, Pontefract

STATUS: Local Geological Site

OTHER DESIGNATIONS:

COUNTY: West Yorkshire

DISTRICT: Wakefield

OS GRID REF. SE 454 215

OS 1:50,000 Landranger 105 York and Selby

OS 1:25,000 Explorer 289 Leeds

BGS 1:50,000 Sheet 78 Wakefield

FIRST DESIGNATED by West Yorkshire RIGS Group in 1996

DATE OF MOST RECENT SURVEY February 2010 by West Yorkshire Geology Trust

DESIGNATION SHEET UPDATED August 2009

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The site is reported to illustrate the boundary between Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures sediments and overlying Permian Yellow Sands Formation (formerly the Basal Permian Sands). However, this boundary could not be found when the site was surveyed recently.

There are two sections to this site:

Mill Hill Road has excellent exposures of the Yellow Sands Formation, although the face is very much overgrown in places. The road, however, is so busy that it is hazardous for more than two or three people to look at the site at once.

Dark Lane has good exposures on the south side of the lane, which are more easily accessible as the road is quiet. The main cliff face is overgrown and dark, but this may be where the unconformity could be seen. There is an excellent exposure on the north side of the lane, but this is not part of the LGS and is in the private garden of Sundial House so permission should be sought from the owners. However, good views can be obtained from the gate.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS:

In other areas around Pontefract the Yellow Sands Formation has been quarried to provide sand for iron-moulding and the manufacture of glass. The road cuttings in Pontefract were utilised in this way. The map in the Wakefield memoir (1999) (Figure 3) shows that this locality was an area of possible sand mining.

Mines have been excavated into the cliff on Mill Hill, though the entrances have now been bricked up. All mining in the Pontefract area ceased in the 1940s, but the Dark Lane and Mill Hill mines closed much earlier. The Mill Hill mine was used during the war as an air raid shelter and the Dark Lane mine for ammunition storage for the Home Guard.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE:

Unfortunately access to the exposures is limited by hazardous roads. However the geology can be observed by a circular walk along Mill Hill Road and Dark Lane. The site is only suitable for small groups of supervised students.

AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS:

ACCESS AND SAFETY:

Parking is very limited in the area - be prepared to park away from the locality and walk to the site. Do not approach exposures where there is no roadside pavement.