

File ref: SD 73/2

County: Lancashire **Site Name:** Cock Wood Gorge

District: Ribble Valley

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Local Planning Authority: Ribble Valley Borough Council

National Grid Reference: SE 746344 **Area:** 2.5 (ha) 6.0 (ac)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 103 **1:10,000:** SD 73 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1959 **Date of Last Revision:** 1979

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1983 **Date of Last Revision:** –

Other Information:

Site boundary unchanged.

Reasons for Notification:

Cock Wood Gorge is situated 2 km south west of the village of Whalley where Sabden Brook cuts down through the rock strata to join the River Calder.

The geological interest of this site, in technical terms, may be defined as follows:

This site displays an almost continuous section through the upper part of the Kinderscout Grit to the Revidge Grit, and is important for its excellent exposure of the intervening sediments and their marine bands. The marine bands are of particular consequence as they illustrate the sub-zonation of the late R₁ Zone and indicate the position of the Kinderscoutian–Marsdenian Stage boundary. The section has also received attention for its variable *Sanguinolites* fauna which sheds light upon the evolutionary trends of this bivalve.

In layman's terms, the interest of this site may be expressed more simply, and such a statement is provided below. This should not be taken as definitive and further information as to details of the interest can be obtained from the Nature Conservancy Council.

The river bed and banks within this site provide excellent exposures of a sequence of rock layers of the Namurian Series, formed about 320 million years ago during the Carboniferous Period of geological history. The rocks consist of shales and sandstones and contain layers rich in the fossil remains of marine animals that inhabited the mid-Carboniferous sea. These fossil-rich layers are particularly important as they provide a means for geologists to accurately date the rocks and to compare this sequence with rocks of similar age elsewhere in Britain and overseas. In addition some of the fossils are themselves of special interest and have attracted detailed research. This is an important site for geological studies of the Namurian Series.