

INTRODUCTION

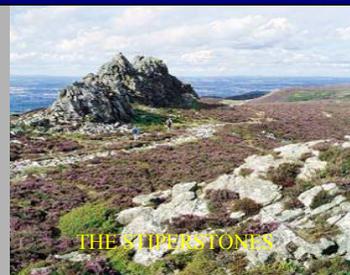
In August 2006 work commenced on production of a Shropshire Geodiversity Action Plan (SGAP). Shropshire County Council, The Shropshire Geological Society and the Shropshire Wildlife Trust are collaborating with other geological stakeholders with the objective of producing the document early in 2007.

The SGAP will aim to promote a wider understanding of the issues and opportunities affecting geological sites and resources within the County, establishing a coherent framework within which actions to protect and promote the county's rich geological heritage can be identified and progressed,

WHAT IS GEODIVERSITY?

Geodiversity means the diversity of geological resources including rocks, fossils, minerals and natural landscapes. Because geodiversity depends on the underlying geology it cannot be increased. It can however be recorded, conserved and made more accessible for the benefit of people and the environment. Geodiversity can contribute to the character and distinctiveness of landscapes and can be an important influence on levels of biodiversity. It can also give rise to benefits in terms of amenity, education and the economic value of minerals.

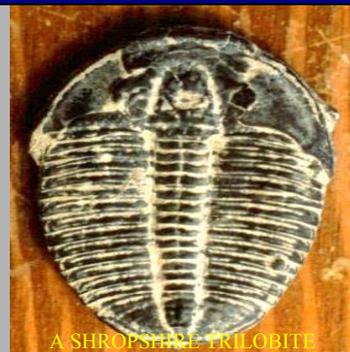
GEODIVERSITY IN SHROPSHIRE



THE STIPERSTONES

Shropshire is exceptionally rich in geodiversity. Rocks representing 11 of the 12 internationally recognised divisions of geological time are recognised within the County and there are numerous important geological sites (SSSI's and RIGS). This includes the deposits of glaciers, deserts, jungle swamps, tropical seas and evidence for a number of major mountain building episodes.

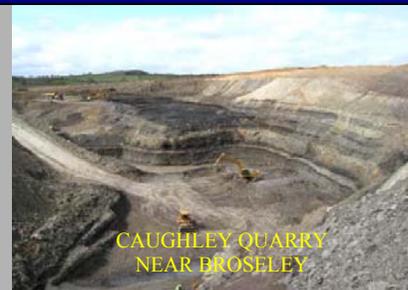
LANDSCAPE AND FOSSILS



A SHROPSHIRE TRILOBITE

Geodiversity accounts for the wide variety of landscapes within the County, from glacial plains of the north to the wooded limestone scarp of Wenlock Edge and the Precambrian moorland of the Longmynd. The wide range of mineral resources in the County has influenced historic settlement patterns and buildings and was instrumental at Ironbridge in the birth of the Industrial Revolution. The County is also renowned for its fossil remains including the Conover Mammoth.

GEOLOGICAL RESEARCH



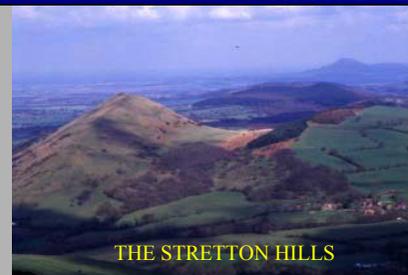
CAUGHLEY QUARRY NEAR BROSELEY

Shropshire was an important focus for pioneering research in the 19th Century which determined the relationships between older (Lower Palaeozoic) rocks, laying the foundations for modern geology. Place names such as Ludlow and Wenlock are recognised internationally as divisions of geological time and the County continues to be an active focus for ongoing geological research.

WHY DOES SHROPSHIRE NEED A GEODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN?

Shropshire's rich geological heritage needs to be conserved so that it is available for enjoyment and study by current and future generations. Much good work is already being undertaken. However, a number of issues have the potential to impact significantly on Shropshire's geological resources in the future unless proactive measures are planned at this stage. This includes both threats such as natural deterioration over time of geological outcrops and infilling old quarries, and opportunities such as grant funding for geological trails and interpretation.

WHAT DOES THE SGAP MEAN TO ME?



THE STRETTON HILLS

The SGAP has significance to a wide range of audiences including:

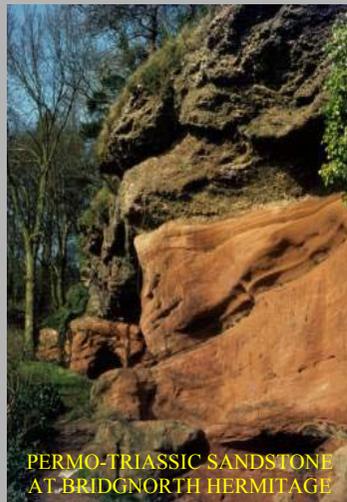
- interested local residents and communities;
- developers and landowners;
- the minerals industry;
- tourists with an interest in geology;
- schools, colleges and universities;
- institutions / individuals undertaking research

WHAT ARE THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE SGAP?

Some of the main objectives of the SGAP are to:

- encourage a more widespread awareness of existing geological conservation work, initiatives and issues in Shropshire and the value of geodiversity;
- provide a clear framework to coordinate geological conservation work in Shropshire and identify specific proposals to promote geological conservation;
- provide geological conservation guidance to developers / landowners;
- identify potential opportunities for the public and interested groups to learn about Shropshire's geology and become involved in geological conservation initiatives;
- encourage farmers and landowners to manage land so as to conserve existing geodiversity, for example, by repair of dry-stone ways and local stone buildings.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT



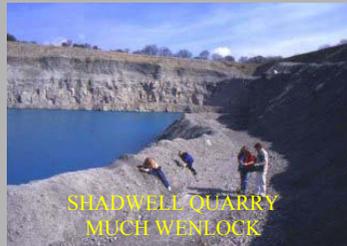
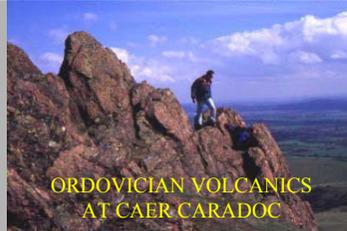
Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) 'Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - A Guide to Good Practice' was published in March 2006.

PPS9 places geological conservation on an equal footing with biodiversity and states (S 2.29) that 'where they have been produced, it would be good practice to use Local Geodiversity Action Plans (LGAPs) as a framework upon which to audit, conserve, manage and promote characteristic geological, geomorphological and soils resources within a particular region'.

A number of Local Geodiversity Action Plans have been produced nationally in the past 10 years, the majority of these within the past 2 years. Nearby areas with LGAP coverage currently include Staffordshire, Cheshire, the Peak District and the Cotswolds.

Given the significance of Shropshire's geology both nationally and internationally it is important for the County to progress its own Geodiversity Action Plan, in order to provide a geological conservation framework to underpin the new development plan system in line with the advice in PPS9.

INFORMATION UPDATES ON THE SGAP



Information updates on progress of the SGAP will be placed on Shropshire County Council's website at: www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning.nsf

You can register an interest in the SGAP process by contacting one of the organisations whose details appear at the end of this leaflet.

You can also become involved through membership of the Shropshire Geological Society. You can apply to join the Society by visiting its website.

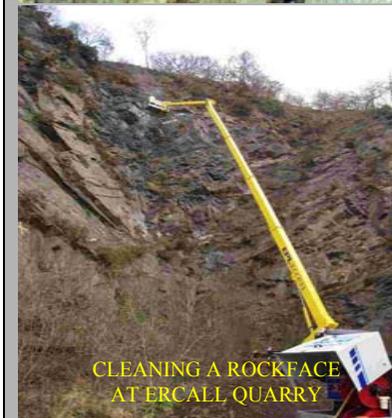


Shropshire County Council, Economy & Environment, August 2006

SHROPSHIRE GEODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning.nsf

SOME POTENTIAL SGAP ACTIONS:



Potential actions recommended by the GAPS could include:

- audit of geological information and assets;
- geological photo database;
- web based geological information resource;
- geographic information system based survey of outcrops, quarries and mining features;
- establishing more circular geological trails;
- consolidating facilities for museum exhibits;
- database of locally important sites (LIGS);
- establish single SSSI/RIGS/LIGS database;
- produce interpretation leaflets;
- assess the need for a Shropshire Geopark;
- grant procurement strategy.
- strategy to identify / involve stakeholders;
- public participation strategy identifying geological conservation opportunities;
- identify opportunities to link geological conservation to other initiatives (i.e. ecology);

CONTACT INFORMATION

Shropshire County Council: Tel: (01743) 252515; Fax: (01743) 252505

Web: www.shropshire.gov.uk/planning.nsf ; www.shropshire.gov.uk/museums.nsf

Email: planning.development@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Shropshire Geological Society:

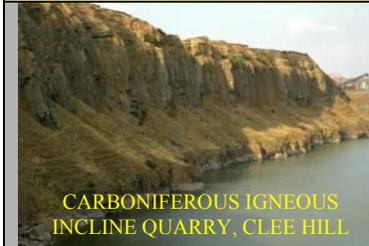
Web: www.shropshiregeology.org.uk

Email: info@shropshiregeology.org.uk

Shropshire Wildlife Trust: Tel: (01743) 284 280; Fax: (01743) 284281

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