

COED COCHION

SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST



YOUR SPECIAL SITE AND ITS FUTURE

‘Your Special Site and its Future’ is part of our commitment to improve the way we work with Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) owners and occupiers. In it, we explain what is special about the geology on your site, and what care is needed to look after its geology into the future.

All SSSIs are considered to be of national importance and we recognise the crucial role that owners and occupiers play in their management and protection. We need you to share your views and knowledge of this site with us, to help safeguard it.

We hope that you will find ‘Your Special Site and its Future’ interesting and helpful. Please contact us if there is anything about the site and its management that you would like to discuss.

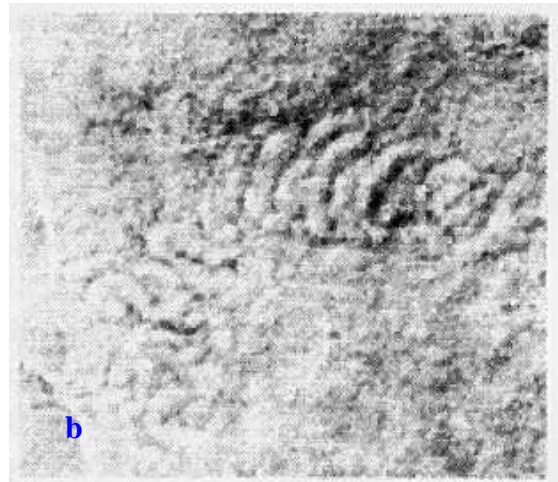
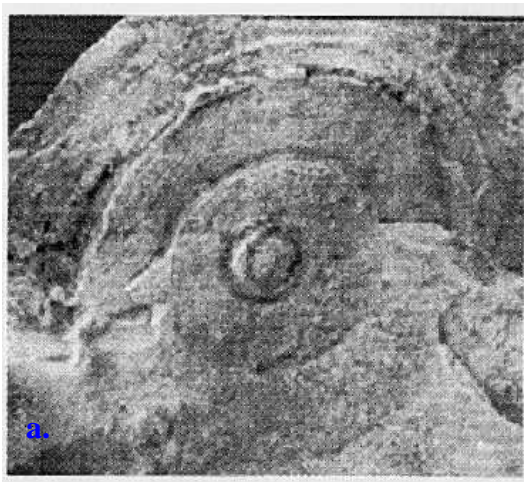
What is 'special' about the geology at Coed Cochion SSSI?

Coed Cochion has one special feature:

- fossiliferous Precambrian sedimentary rocks exposed in a small disused quarry.

This SSSI is of international importance because it is one of a relatively small number of localities throughout the world which has yielded fossils of Precambrian age

The fossils include impressions of creatures which appear similar to modern jellyfish (this similarity may be coincidental), together with tracks and/or feeding trails of other sea creatures. They are found within finely-laminated ashy siltstones.



Precambrian fossils from Coed Cochion;

a. 'medusoid' (similar to 'jellyfish')

b. feeding trail



laminated siltstone from Coed Cochion



jellyfish stranded on beach

Some of the fossils were formed by burial of soft-bodied sea creatures in fine-sand/silt on an ancient shoreline. Jellyfish are often found stranded on present-day beaches (see photo).

What do we want Coed Cochion SSSI to look like?

The following is a description of how we would like to see the future development of Coed Cochion:

Our aims for this site will be focused on ensuring that the exposures of sedimentary rock and associated fossils remain available for study by suitably experienced scientists. Because of the extreme rarity of fossiliferous Precambrian rocks, it has been decided that the rock layers that have previously yielded fossils should be covered by loose stone to discourage illegal collecting. This will mean that Coed Cochion SSSI continues to provide a suitable location for the study of this internationally important sequence of Precambrian sedimentary rocks and associated fossils, and contributes to the network of sites that has been established for the study of Precambrian rocks in the UK.

What management is needed on Coed Cochion SSSI and why?

Coed Cochion SSSI is a nationally important site for study of Precambrian rocks.

Although the quarry has been shown to be an excellent place to study geology, it will only remain so if the necessary management is carried out. CCW will do its best to ensure that you receive any help that is necessary for this task.

What does this mean in practice?

There are a number of different factors that could damage or reduce the scientific value of the special feature of the SSSI if they are not properly managed. The following are the ones we regard as most important:

- **Quarrying**
Renewed working of the quarry is prohibited because of the possible danger of completely destroying the fossiliferous lenses of rock, which are of unknown extent. Quarrying within 25m of the existing boundary of the site could also be potentially harmful to the scientific interest.
- **Accessibility**
The quarry is situated on privately owned land so we rely on your cooperation in allowing access to those requesting permission to visit the exposures. The photograph shows the appearance of the rock faces within Coed Cochion. Freshening of rock faces may also be required at some point in the future. This should only be done manually by suitably experienced research scientists.
- **Visibility**
In general, maintaining visibility of rocks within geological sites is an important management objective. However, in this case, because the exposure is in a fairly remote location and there is a danger of illegal collecting of fossils, it has been decided to bury the fossiliferous layer with loose rock, and to allow brambles and other vegetation to grow in order to provide additional protection.
- **Fossil collecting**
Anyone seeking permission from the owner to visit the site for geological study must also be asked to contact CCW so that their scientific aims can be reviewed and terms of the permission can be agreed. This should ensure that the results of the research are added to site documentation maintained by CCW, and that any fossils collected are properly curated at an appropriate location. A sign (to be provided by CCW) could be erected at the rock face to provide notice of these requirements. Assistance from the owner and local residents as volunteer 'wardens' to report any suspicious activities (such as the activities of dealers who often seek to remove large numbers of specimens for sale) would be helpful towards the aims of conserving the scientific resource.
- **Road improvements**
The exposure is adjacent to a junction between a public road and a forestry track. If either Carmarthenshire County Council's Highways Department or the forestry owner has any plans for road/track improvements it is essential that there is adequate consultation. CCW geologist's recommendations should be followed to ensure that the SSSI feature is not damaged.

Finally

Our knowledge of geology is continually improving and sites such as this are vital in that process. It is possible that new issues may arise in the future, whilst other issues may disappear. This statement is written with the best information we have now, but may have to change in the future as our understanding improves.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your SSSI, or have any concerns about your SSSI, please contact your local CCW office.

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