CITATION

CORSEWALL POINT TO MILLEUR POINT
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST

Dumfries and Galloway

Site code: 407

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NX000729

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 76, 82
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 309

AREA: 83.28 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological: Stratigraphy: Caradoc - Ashgill

DESCRIPTION

Corsewall Point lies at the northern tip of The Rhins at the entrance to Loch Ryan 12km north of Stranraer. The site is strategically positioned within Scotland, adjacent to the Southern Uplands Fault. This fault separates the Midland Valley Block to the north from the Southern Uplands Block to the south. As the Southern Uplands Fault approaches the west coast of Scotland it splits in two to form a sub-block. Corsewall Point is situated within the sub-block.

The designated site conserves the late Llandeilo/early Caradoc age, 500m thick, Corsewall Point member of the Corsewall Formation. This is composed of conglomerate, a rock containing boulders and pebbles of other rocks, e.g. granite, gabbro and chert, set in a matrix of sandstone. The excellent exposure, large size of the boulders and strategic positioning of the conglomerate combine to make it one of the most important sites for interpreting the geology of Scotland in Lower Palaeozoic times.

The conglomerate has been interpreted as a channel fill sequence within a submarine fan. It was deposited in a large ocean located between ancient Scottish and English continental landmasses prior to their collision at the end of the Silurian period. The superb exposure of the sedimentary structures at the site make it one of the best and most studied examples of a submarine fan complex in Europe. Recent studies of the boulders suggest they had a source not in Scotland, but in northwest Newfoundland. This would require a left-handed horizontal movement of at least 1500km taking place along the Southern Uplands Fault during the collision of the Scottish and English continents. This controversial conclusion has major implications for future geological interpretations of Southern Scotland and has ensured that the Corsewall Point conglomerate will remain of major importance for earth science research well into the future.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949: 1971

Re-notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: 11 March 1994.

Notification reviewed under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: 14 December 2010.

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected.