

CITATION

**ESHANESS COAST
SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST**
Shetland Islands

Site code: 615

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: HU 217806, HU 211772

OS 1:50,000 SHEET NO: Landranger Series 3
1:25,000 SHEET NO: Explorer Series 469

AREA: 43.08 hectares

NOTIFIED NATURAL FEATURES

Geological: Igneous petrology: Old Red Sandstone Igneous

DESCRIPTION

Eshaness Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located along the western coast of the Esha Ness peninsula in the north Mainland of Shetland. It comprises the cliffs and coastal rock exposures from The Burr in the north to Stenness in the south. It is notified for the wide variety of igneous rocks exposed along the coast.

The spectacular cliffs of the Eshaness Coast SSSI provide a superbly-exposed section through the thickest sequence of volcanic rocks found in the Old Red Sandstone of western Shetland. The rocks are of possible Middle Devonian age, between 397 million and 385 million years old. Closely jointed pink-weathering andesites (fined-grained intermediate igneous rocks) are intercalated with dark, vesicular basic andesites that show complex interaction with the adjacent sediments. At Eshaness, a thick pile of coarse andesitic volcanic ash (tuffs) and bedded agglomerates is present. The rhyolite (fine-grained acidic igneous rock) ash-flow tuff at the Grind of the Navir provides fine three-dimensional exposures of an ignimbrite deposit – a rock composed of volcanic ash and pyroclastic fragments welded together under high temperatures. Geochemical studies show that the lavas are the product of a much greater degree of fractional crystallisation than applied elsewhere in the Old Red Sandstone volcanic province, and are unique in showing a transitional calc-alkaline and tholeiite geochemical signature.

NOTIFICATION HISTORY

First notified under the 1981 Act: 13 February 1989
Notification reviewed under the 2004 Act: 22 February 2011

REMARKS

Measured area of site corrected (from 51.5 ha).