

COUNTY: SUFFOLK      SITE NAME: ROCKHALL WOOD PIT, SUTTON

DISTRICT: SUFFOLK COASTAL

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

Local Planning Authority: SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Grid Reference: TM 305440      Area: 5.4 (ha.) 13.3 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 169      1:10,000: TM 34 SW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954      Date of Last Revision: N/A

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1986      Date of Last Revision: N/A

Other Information:

This site was previously known as Pettistree Hall Pit SSSI. It has been reduced in size.

Reasons for Notification:

The pits at Rockhall Wood afford similar and excellent exposures of Pliocene Coralline Crag. They show a sequence from silty unleached sediment at the base to coarse bioclastic sediments from which the mineral aragonite has been removed by subaerial diagenesis (post depositional chemical changes). This therefore, represents one of the only localities where the vertical sequence of diagenetic change can be seen. The fauna is rich and is most notable for the abundance of fragments of the bryozoan *Metrarabdotos monilifera*.

These pits have been the subject of numerous studies. Monographs on the crag Mollusca have been based largely on collections made at this locality. A proposed sequence of zones (approximating to time divisions) for the Coralline Crag was based on the vertical sequence of sedimentological and palaeontological features here. Although much of the lower part of the sequence recognised in 1871 is now obscured, this site still presents the most varied and interesting vertical sequence of any Coralline Crag locality. In the study of Pliocene geology this is probably the most important site in Britain.

This locality also shows Lower Pleistocene Red Crag banked up against a buried cliff cut into the Coralline Crag. Prestwich was able to demonstrate wave cut notches and derived boulders of Coralline Crag within the Red Crag sea proving that the inlier of Coralline Crag formed a knoll or reef in the Red Crag sea. Detached blocks of the Pliocene rocks showing boring and encrustation by barnacles. A key site showing a 'fossil' cliff-line and demonstrating the erosive relationship between the Coralline and Red-Crags.