

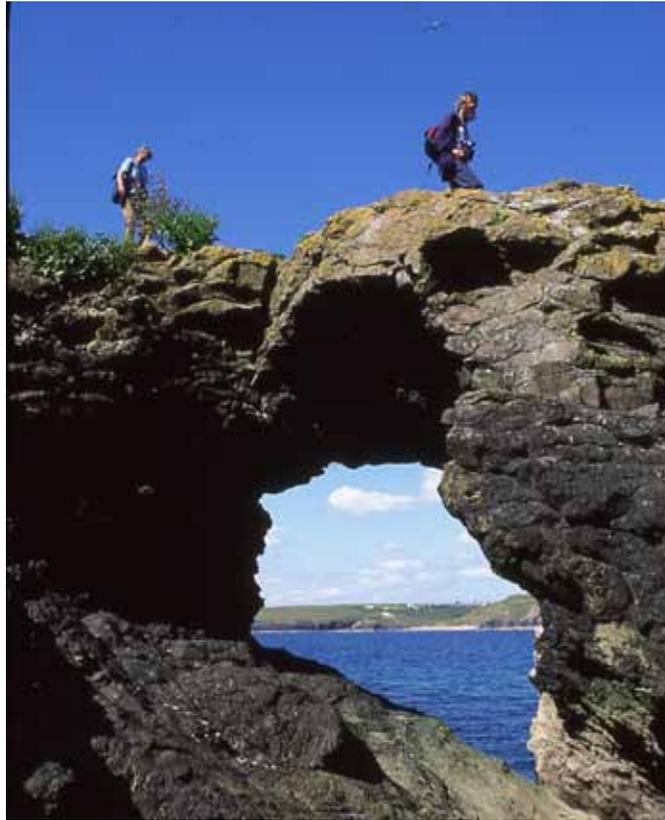
Why County Geology Sites are important in combating threats to our geological heritage.

Designation of County Geology Sites:

- Raises awareness of the scientific importance of sites, protecting them from damage by scrub invasion and neglect, or threats such as the tidying up of derelict land (e.g. mine dumps and quarries), infilling, tipping and over-collecting. Many sites have been lost because their importance was not recognised.
- Conserves sites for public appreciation and enjoyment. Many are beautiful and evocative landscapes that initiate appreciation of the natural environment and inspire an interest in Earth heritage.
- Maintains an educational resource. Many are key sites in understanding the evolution of Cornwall and are important for both school-based learning and for individuals to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Protects sites that are historically important for advances in geological knowledge or have historical links with the local environment, culture, folklore or religion.



A couple enjoy rocking the Logan Stone at Helman Tor, a County Geology Site accessible to the public. Photo by John Macadam



A bridge of pillow lava on Mullion Island, part of the West Lizard Cliffs County Geology Site. Photo by Colin Bristow

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County Geology Sites



Conservation of Cornwall's Earth heritage dates back to the 1860s, as shown by The Cheesewring County Geology Site, protected from quarrying by fleur-de-lys markings carved in the granite (foreground). Photo by John Macadam

This leaflet explains the importance and value of County Geology Sites.

Cornwall Geoconservation Group and Cornwall Wildlife Trust recognise the importance of local landowners and their interest in the countryside. We aim to work with them to enable them to manage important geological features sensitively.



Protecting Cornwall's geology for the future

What is a County Geology Site?

County Geology Sites (CGSs) are some of the most significant areas for geology and Earth heritage in Cornwall. They underpin and expand the network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and are of county or regional importance in their own right. There are over 115 CGSs in Cornwall, in both public and private ownership. They represent local character and distinctiveness, and range from man-made features such as mine spoil, underground workings, quarries and road cuttings - which give us rare inland exposures - to large landscape features such as river corridors, estuaries, coastal cliffs and shore platforms.



County Geology Sites can be on operational industrial land: Goonbarrow china clay pit. Photo by Peter Scott

How are County Geology Sites selected?

County Geology Sites are selected and evaluated by the Cornwall Geoconservation Group (formerly Cornwall RIGS Group) through a Local Sites Partnership made up of representatives from a range of other organisations in Cornwall and using criteria based on nationally agreed parameters. The process began in the 1990s and continues to the present day, using a combination of past and local knowledge, aerial photographs and site surveys where possible.

County Geology Sites are selected by reference to detailed criteria based on four themes:

1. Scientific importance.
2. Educational value.
3. Historical and cultural significance.
4. Aesthetic value (value for public awareness & appreciation).

What does owning a County Geology Site mean for me? - The benefits and implications of County Geology Site ownership

Before a site is designated as a County Geology Site the proposal is discussed with both the landowner and the mineral rights owner (where this can be ascertained).

- As an owner of a CGS you are helping to protect part of Cornwall's geological heritage.
- As the CGS designation is non-statutory, no additional restrictions over and above the current EIA (agric.) regulations are placed on any agricultural operations. For details see www.gov.uk/guidance/eia-agriculture-regulations-apply-to-make-changes-to-rural-land.
- Landowners and managers remain in control of all land management decisions.
- Access is by permission of the landowner only and no rights of access are created.
- For substantial changes in land use of a CGS, Local Authorities take geology and Earth heritage into account, together with all other planning considerations.
- Cornwall Geoconservation Group can provide free surveys and management advice for CGS landowners.



Mine spoil at Lambriggan County Geology Site. Photo by Mike Hermolle

Cornwall Geoconservation Group

The Cornwall Geoconservation Group (CGG) is affiliated to the Cornwall Wildlife Trust and is one of over 50 county-based geoconservation groups throughout the UK. Its membership is drawn from the local community to reflect a wide spectrum of interests including professional and amateur geologists, planners, museum curators, geologists with experience of education at all levels from primary to postgraduate, and representatives from geological societies and other bodies involved in conservation such as Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Natural England and the National Trust.

The overall aim of the Cornwall Geoconservation Group is to identify, conserve and raise awareness about the geological and geomorphological heritage of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. To achieve this it surveys, documents, assesses and monitors County Geology Sites. It also organises events, produces interpretative material to promote local geological heritage to the wider community, and helps in managing geological nature reserves owned or leased by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust.



Cleaning the rock face at Tresayes Geological Nature Reserve. Photo by John Macadam