

GLENDESHA

A SPECIAL PLACE...



Glendasha - The rocks outcrop alongside a forest path.

Glendasha has been declared an ASSI because of its important geology. It is part of the Slieve Gullion volcanic complex and is located along the western side of Slievebrack.

In Tertiary times, some 60 million years ago, Slieve Gullion was the site of a volcano. Subsidence or collapse of this central unit was related to a ring fault, some 20km in diameter. This fault acted as a zone of weakness into which further igneous (molten) rock was injected. This produced the ring-dyke system which has been exposed, through erosion of the softer surrounding rocks, to reveal the near-circular system known as the Ring of Gullion. It is one of the best examples of a ring-dyke system in the British Isles.

The main rock exposed at Glendasha is a type of acid igneous rock called porphyritic felsite. A volcanic vent agglomerate is also exposed, containing older volcanic rock which formed during an explosive eruptive phase. A violent explosion ripped the older rock, known as Newry granodiorite, from the wall of the ring-dyke. The debris-filled vent,

together with the main ring itself, was then intruded by the molten felsite.



This photo shows the agglomerate is made from a jumble of small blocks of rock

Flow structures in the felsite are inclined to the south where it is in contact with the vent agglomerate.

Occasional units of basic igneous rock are also found. These are part of the earliest eruptive materials from Slieve Gullion volcano.

SITES OF BIOLOGICAL AND EARTH SCIENCE IMPORTANCE HAVE BEEN SURVEYED BY NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT AGENCY TO ASSESS THEIR SCIENTIFIC INTEREST. THE BEST SITES ARE NOW BEING DECLARED AS AREAS OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (ASSIs). IN DOING SO WE AIM TO SAFEGUARD THESE IMPORTANT SITES FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Glendasha and the surrounding area are of international geological importance, for the part they have played in a number of theories related to the development of and interaction between these igneous rocks. Glendasha also provides a fuller understanding of the geological history of the Slieve Gullion Ring complex.

Correct management is essential for special places like Glendasha. To retain access to and use of the rock exposures in the ASSI it is important to keep the site open. Dumping of waste, excessive encroachment by vegetation or inappropriate development could all damage the site. Northern Ireland Environment Agency is keen to work closely with landowners to maintain and enhance Glendasha ASSI.