

DORSET LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES SURVEY

Site number G SY49/14

Site name Wanderwell quarry, Bothenhampton Nature Reserve

Summary description

Jurassic, Forest Marble.

An outcrop of the Middle Jurassic Bathonian stage Forest Marble runs in a narrow band on the eastern side of Bridport and was formerly used as an important building stone over a wide area of west Dorset. Many quarries were previously worked along the hill as far as Burton Bradstock. The Forest Marble is a shelly, sparite (crystalline calcite cemented) limestone that has superior waterproofing properties. The limestone beds are interspersed with bands of clay, and old photographs show that there were thin bands of limestone at the top of the excavation, with thicker bands near the base. The original limekiln has been renovated and a RIGS designation complements the past industrial history of the site.

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Many maps of Bothenhampton parish have shown the quarries, which extended eastwards along the hill. A description published in 1894 (Woodward p 342) gives the following:

Bluish-grey, iron-stained and marly clays with 'race' (?) laminae of sandy limestone, and thin flags of blue shelly limestone.....14 ft.
Bluish-grey oolitic shell limestone; false-bedded with ochreous nodules, lignite and impersistent clay seams. Fossils with purplish tinges.....6 ft.
Alternations of blue marly clay and shell limestone with lignite.....5 ft.

The old photographs indicate that the quarry may have been deeper than when Woodward described it.

Published references

Woodward, H.B., 1894, Jurassic Rocks of Britain. The Lower oolitic rocks of England. vol. iv. *Geological Survey Memoir, UK*.