



South Wales RIGS Group Site Record

RIGS Description

SECTION A

General	South Wales
Site Name: Bloodstone	File Number: AH_03
RIGS Number: 726	Surveyed by: AJ Humpage
Grid Reference: SO 28368 24017	Date of Visit: 9 February 2011
RIGS Category: Scientific	Date Registered:
Earth Science Category: Geomorphological, Sedimentological	Unknown
Site Nature: Open moorland	Documentation prepared by: AJH
Unitary Authority: Monmouthshire CC	Documentation last revised: 19 August 2011
OS 1:50,000 Sheet: 161	Photographic Record: See images attached to this report
OS 1:25,000 Explorer Sheet: OL 13	
BGS 1:50,000 Sheet: 214 (Talgarth)	

RIGS Statement of Interest: This site forms part of a network of important scientific sites within the South Wales RIGS area associated with the Old Red Sandstone sedimentology. It is also an important historical marker.

The Bloodstone (Welsh : Dialgarreg) marks the location where on 15 April 1136, Richard Fitz Gilbert de Clare, Lord of Usk and Ceredigion and founder of the priory of St Mary Magdelene, Tonbridge, was supposedly ambushed and murdered by Welsh rebels during a revolt against Norman rule. The uprising had begun on 1 January 1136 when the Welsh won a victory over the local Norman forces between Loughor and Swansea.

The site is underlain by bedded sandstones of the Devonian age Senni Formation and the Bloodstone is composed of a series of slabs and an upright monolith all typically Senni Formation sandstone in terms of lithology and colour, being red/grey massive medium-grained sandstone. The exposed bedrock surface immediately to the NW of the Bloodstone itself exhibits well developed syn-sedimentological structures which may be associated with dewatering/compaction. The bedding dip on this surface is 124/14° SW.

In addition, the site also marks the interfluvium between two distinctly different valley forms – open and U-shaped to the east, and narrow and V-shaped to the west, which has resulted in discussion on the extent of glaciation within the Black Mountains, and offers excellent views of the Darren/Cwmyoy landslides

Geological setting/context:

The history associated with the Bloodstone is referred to by Baker-Gabb (1913).

The landscape evolution history of the Black Mountains is not well understood, as although extensive glacial deposits have been mapped in the dip-slope valleys of the Honddu, Grwyne Fawr and Grwyne Fechan (BGS 2004), there is no evidence of mid-Wales ice incursion over the northern escarpment of the Black Mountains, or conclusive evidence of glaciation of the Black Mountains during the last (Devensian) Ice Age, although Lewis and Thomas (2005) reported kame topography around Llanbedr in the Grwyne Fechan and glacial deposits were mapped on the basis of an aerial photograph interpretation reconnaissance survey in 2002 (BGS 2004).

Lewis and Thomas (2005) considered glacial oversteepening of the Llanthony valley east of the Bloodstone has occurred and argued for a glacial origin for the sediments at the Hermitage in the Grwyne Fawr. However recent work (Thomas and Humpage 2007; Humpage in prep) has begun to cast doubt on the glaciation of the Black Mountains during the Late Devensian, although it is acknowledged that the area was probably over-ridden by ice during earlier glacial stadials.

Notwithstanding this, the interfluvium occupied by the Bloodstone is barren of frost shattered rock which may indicate exposure as a nunatak during the Late Devensian. One possible theory is that although the Black Mountains may not have been glaciated at this time, thick semi-permanent snow cover prevailed, preserving features and barren surfaces associated with earlier glacial episodes with relatively little modification or accumulation of periglacial deposits.

References:

Baker-Gabb, R. (1913) Hills and Vales of the Black Mountains District. 81pp.

British Geological Survey (2004). *Talgarth. England and Wales Sheet 214. Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50,000*. British Geological Survey, Keyworth, Nottingham.

Humpage, A.J. (in prep). *Geological Assessment of Llanvihangel Crucorney Moraine SSSI*. BGS Commissioned Report.

Lewis, C.A. and Thomas, G.S.P. (2005). The Upper Wye and Usk Regions. In: C.A. Lewis and A.E. Richards (Eds). *The Glaciations of Wales and Adjacent Regions*. Logaston Press, Logaston, Herefordshire.

Thomas, G.S.P. and Humpage, A.J. (2007). Llanvihangel Crucorney,. In: S.J. Carr, C.G. Coleman, A.J. Humpage and R.A. Shakesby (Eds). *Quaternary of the Brecon Beacons: Field Guide*. Quaternary Research Association, London.

SECTION B

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Please score Accessibility and Safety Red Amber or Green

Accessibility:



Comment: On open access land and easily accessible along ridgeway byway or via footpaths from either valley.

Safety:



Conservation status:

There are no known conservation designations on this RIGS.

OWNERSHIP/PLANNING CONTROL:

Owner/tenant: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Planning Authority: Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

Planning status/constraints/opportunities: There are no known planning constraints or opportunities

CONDITION, USE & MANAGEMENT:

Present use: Open moorland/ rough grazing

Site condition: Good

Potential threats: None

Site Management:

SITE DEVELOPMENT:

Potential use (general): potential site as part of a network looking at synsedimentary structures and beds in Old Red Sandstone

Potential use (educational): Good accessible site to view valleys on either side of interfluvium

Other comments:

Historical background to the murder:

Richard had been away from his lordship in the early part of the year. Returning to the borders of Wales in April, he ignored warnings of the danger and pressed on toward Ceredigion, travelling north-west from Abergavenny castle with only a small force. He had not gone far when on 15 April he was ambushed and killed by the men of Gwent under Iorwerth ab Owain and his brother Morgan, grandsons of Caradog ap Gruffydd,

in a woody tract called "the ill-way of Coed Grano", near Llanthony Abbey. He was buried in Tonbridge Priory.

The news of Richard's death induced Owain Gwynedd, son of Gruffydd ap Cynan, king of Gwynedd to invade his Lordship. In alliance with Gruffydd ap Rhys of Deheubarth, he won a crushing victory over the Normans at the Battle of Crug Mawr, just outside Cardigan. The town of Cardigan was taken and burnt, and Richard's widow, Adelize, took refuge in Cardigan Castle, which was successfully defended by Robert fitz Martin. She was rescued by Miles of Gloucester who led an expedition to bring her to safety in England.

Photographic Record



The Bloodstone composed of blocks and slabs of Senni Formation sandstone



Exposed bedding surface adjacent to the Bloodstone





Syn sedimentary structures within Senni Formation

Annotated Sketch