South Wales RIGS Group Site Record
RIGS Description

SECTION A

General	South Wales
Site Name: Foel Fawr	**File Number:** Site_JC_9
RIGS Number: 789	**Surveyed by:** Rhian Kendall, John Conway
Grid Reference: SN 7350 1860	**Date of Visit:** 4th September 2011
RIGS Category: Scientific, aesthetic	**Date Registered:** **Owner:** Unknown
Earth Science Category:	**Planning Authority:** Carmarthenshire County Council
Site Nature: Limestone pavement	**Documentation prepared by:** Rhian Kendall
Unitary Authority: Carmarthenshire County Council	**Documentation last revised:** 7th March 2012
OS 1:50,000 Sheet: 160	**Photographic Record:** Attached
OS 1:25,000 Explorer Sheet: OL12	
BGS 1:50,000 Sheet: E230	

RIGS Statement of Interest:

This site is an example of a limestone pavement at Foel Fawr. It is interesting rather than a typical pavement in geomorphological term. Grykes are narrow and very shallow and clints are small but unusually are long and thin though there are areas of more normal appearance.

Geological setting/context:

The pavement is in open moorland near the summit of Foel Fawr, 7km NNE of Brynamman on A4069. Access by public footpath from the car park on the roadside.

Pavements occur where limestone outcrops or is near the surface. Although this is the case in many places, the development of pavement is very rare with only 100 hectares in Wales, making it one of our rarest habitats.

It is thought that glaciers are responsible for stripping soil in some of these upland limestone areas, leaving bare limestone exposed. Since then, rain and frost exploits the joints and other fractures, dissolving the rock and creating channels though which water runs away. The channels are known as grykes and the intervening blocks are called clints.

The example of limestone pavement at Foel Fawr is interesting rather than a typical pavement in geomorphological term. Grykes are narrow and very shallow and clints are small but unusually are long and thin though there are areas of more normal appearance. Relatively little damage was observed, but the area is subject to frost shatter. Grazed by sheep. The pavement is probably more extensive underneath the cover of vegetation and much of the pavement is broken up into areas of lose blocks.

The pavement is developed in Oxwich Head Limestone Formation on the Pembroke Limestone Group.

References:

CONWAY, J S, ONSLOW, E. 1999. The impact of grazing management on limestone pavements in Wales. CCW

DEACON, J. 1996. dentification of limestone pavements in Wales and their flora. CCW

WARD, S D and EVANS, D F. 1975. A botanical survey and conservation assessment of British limestone pavements - Vol1. Institute of Terrestrial Ecology

Our Fragile Heritage – Limestone Pavement in Wales. CCW

SECTION B

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: Please score Accessibility and Safety Red Amber or Green			
Accessibility:			X
Comment: Very accessible from nearby carpark.			
Safety:			X
Comment: Relatively safe although the site is in upland countryside so appropriate clothing and footwear would be required. Care should also be taken when approaching the site as dolines and sink holes are very common.			
Conservation status: There are no known conservation designations of this RIGS			

OWNERSHIP/PLANNING CONTROL:

Owner/tenant: Unknown

Planning Authority: Carmarthenshire County Council

Planning status/constraints/opportunities:

There are no known planning constraints or opportunities

CONDITION, USE & MANAGEMENT:

Present use: None – open countryside

Site condition: fairly good.

Potential threats: These sites are subject to damage from theft as people collect the limestone as garden features.

Site Management: The site should be maintained in its current condition as damage is impossible to rectify.

SITE DEVELOPMENT:

Potential use (general): Limestone pavement is aesthetically pleasing but also very rare and should be conserved to people to see.

Potential use (educational): This site could be educationally important for education on modern processes especially as its very easily accessible from the car park. It could also provide an interested addition to any interpretation boards or publications that might be put together for the adjacent Herberts Quarry area.

Other comments:

Photographic Record

View of part of the limestone pavement on Foel Fawr

Detail of part of the limestone pavement at Foel Fawr