
NWHG Ref. 044 — Loch Awe Quarry

Location, grid reference and photograph

The site is located on the east side of the A 837 towards the north-east corner of Loch Awe, north of Ledmore Junction, Grid Ref. [NC 250 158].

(Figure 40) A fossil specimen of *Olenellus lapworthi* Peach trilobite, collected at Loch Awe quarry,. BGS Biostratigraphy Collection number GSM 102270, BGS Photo P521151.

GCR site reference, block, volume and notified feature of SSSI?

GCR Ref. 1023, Cambrian Block, Vol. 18. Confirmed GCR site, not SSSI notified.

Description and geological significance

The potash-rich (Lower Cambrian age) Furoid Beds are well exposed in the Quarry face and contain well-preserved and age-diagnostic faunas of olenellid trilobites, including the type (and only) locality for *Olenellus hamoculus*, in exceptional abundance. These dolomitic shales have provided very useful information on the Early Cambrian age and palaeogeography of the Furoid Beds, enabling correlation with areas in Greenland, Canada and Spitsbergen.

Accessibility

The entrance to the Quarry is located at the eastern edge of the A 837 and there is limited parking provision immediately on the opposite side of the road on an unsurfaced verge. There is a larger, surfaced layby a short distance further north on the west side of the road ([NC 250 161]). The Quarry faces and the constituent strata are visible, at a distance, from the entrance off the A 837. The floor of the Quarry is, however, at a higher level than the A 837 road surface, and it is necessary to negotiate both a deep ditch and a steep slope from the road. The Quarry area is locally strewn with rock boulders and it is not presently possible to gain unimpeded access to the main Quarry faces without having to negotiate accumulations of broken rock dumped on the Quarry floor. At present, therefore, all abilities access to the actual rock faces is not possible but this can be improved with some judicious clearing of the Quarry floor and entrance.

Conservation

In the light of the palaeontological significance of the site, and its proximity to the A 837, there is a moderate to high conservation requirement.

Visibility and “clarity”

Visibility of the stratified Furoid Beds is excellent from the entrance to the Quarry.

Interpretation and interpretation potential

The Loch Awe Quarry site currently does not have any interpretation facilities on-site. However, there is considerable potential for new interpretation aimed at both the general public and geological specialists. The immediate area is a popular one for both visitors and fishermen using Loch Awe and the Quarry could be usefully developed as an excellent interpretation locality, with exhibits of the fossiliferous strata being displayed and the implications for palaeogeographical reconstruction explained. However, it should be borne in mind that this is a working quarry. Certainly, the site should be included in a future Geopark guide and it could also be included in any future guided walk of the Canisp area, as it is

close to a suitable starting point

Key references

PRIGMORE, J.K. & RUSHTON, A.W.A. 1999. Scotland: Cambrian and Ordovician of the Hebridean Terrane. In Rushton, A. W. A., Owen, A. W., Owens, R. M. & Prigmore, J. K. (eds) *British Cambrian to Ordovician Stratigraphy*. Geological Conservation Review Series, 18, Chapman & Hall, 295–315.



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