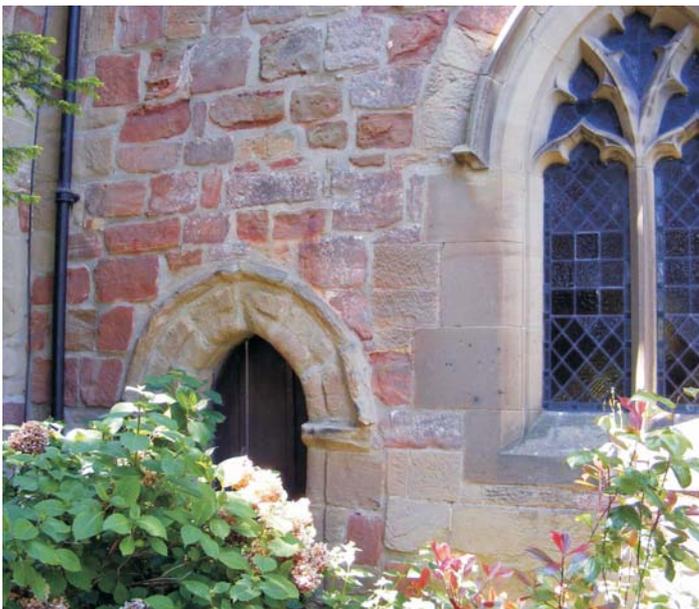


## Highley and Stanley Quarry: Andrew Jenkinson: 9th June

This Sunday afternoon walk was part of the Abberley and Malvern Geofest programme. The itinerary included looking at building stones, quarries and the formation of the Severn Valley. Four SGS members and one Highley resident, met at the Severn Valley Country Park car park at GR SO 745830.

The weather was warm and sunny as we set forth along a grassy path bordered with Meadow Cranesbill and way-marked "Highley Trail". This path took us past some cottages which were built, for quarrymen, using the Highley green sandstone. Nearby we saw a little school building built from the same sandstone and dated 1863, the building is now used as the Parish Hall. Our next stop was the churchyard of St. Mary's Church, where we hoped to see a range of stones used for the memorials; however because of restrictions imposed by the diocese of Worcester to achieve uniformity, most of the headstones are of polished Welsh slate. However we did notice that one was polished Gneiss. St. Mary's is the oldest building in the village, the present nave and chancel having been built in the early 1100's.

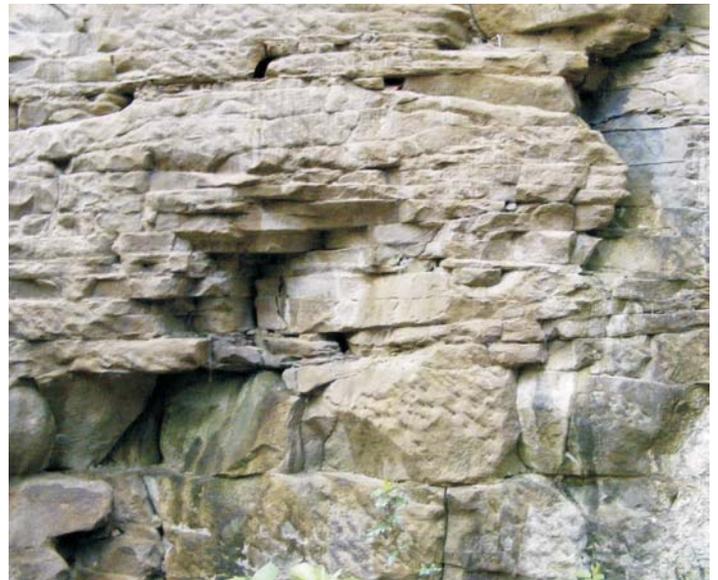
We looked at the old part of the church and noted that both green Highley sandstone and red Bridgnorth sandstone had been used in the construction. Cross bedding can be seen in some of the blocks of Highley sandstone. Leaving the churchyard we walked a short distance along the Geopark Way and looked westwards across open countryside to the dolerite capped hills, Brown Clec and Titterstone Clec.



*Green Highley Sandstone and red Bridgnorth Sandstone used in the construction of the earliest part of St. Mary's church*

We turned back into the village and walked past rows of tidy terraced houses. One row had the most

beautifully kept allotments just on the opposite side of the street. Following in the footsteps of the miners on their way to the pit, we walked down Pit Bank towards the river and were able to see that unlike further upstream at Eardington for example, where the river terraces are much wider, they are quite narrow in this vicinity. This narrowing of the valley is because of the presence of the harder rocks of the Coal Measures which have proved more resistant to erosion than the Bridgnorth sandstone. At one point we crossed the tracks of the Severn Valley Railway which runs on the second terrace. We walked back along the willow-fringed river bank, past the Ship Inn built in 1770, of Highley sandstone of course! Leaving the river bank behind we walked up the Geopark Way where we saw Highley sandstone in situ in part of Stanley quarry. Many of the blocks of sandstone exhibited the pick marks of the old quarrymen.



*Sandstone in situ at Stanley quarry*

Mining at Highley started in 1879 and the Highley Brooch (or five-foot) Coal was worked throughout the life of the pit. As this coal was worked out on the Highley side of the river in the 1930's, the seam was followed beneath the river and in 1935 a new shaft was sunk, to a depth of 377 yards, on the opposite side of the river at Alveley. Mining at Alveley continued in the hope of exploiting the seam eastwards to link with Baggeridge Colliery in the Black Country, but this was thwarted by faults and mining ended at Alveley in January 1969.

This was a most interesting Rockhop and a really enjoyable afternoon. Many thanks are due to Andrew Jenkinson who led this walk. The time and effort put in by Andrew to make this a most informative trip was greatly appreciated.

*Verity Jackson*