

SITE

Name: Cann Quarry

Parish: Sparkwell

Local Authority: South Hams

National Grid Ref: SX 524 596

OS Sheets: 201 1:50k 201 1:10k SX55NW, **GS Sheet 1:50k** 249

Locality Description: 1km north of Plymbridge, on the east side of the River Plym.

Nature and Status of Site: Medium-sized disused quarry set in woodland. A County Geological Site (www.devonrigs.org.uk).

Summary of Geological / Geomorphological Interest: The site contains an 'elvan' dyke, intruding the slate. Elvan is an old south-west miners term referring to any granite or microgranitic dyke. The slates into which the dyke was intruded are smooth and grey with some visible folding. The dyke is composed of white/creamy microgranite and contains small inclusions of granite demonstrating that it post-dates the Dartmoor Granite. The site has historical importance and interest, as it was worked for slate as far back as 1683.

The form of the dyke is particularly well shown by its continued exposure in Bickleigh Vale Quarries on the west bank of the Plym (see separate entry in Register).

Safety Considerations: Care should be taken in the vicinity of old quarry faces.

Educational Age Groups: Secondary, College/6th Form, University.

Parking and Access: Walk or cycle along the canal path or the old railway cycle route from the National Trust car park approximately 1 km to the south. The site can be reached along the [Plym Valley Trail](#). Buses also operating within the area and trains into Plymouth. For timetable details, visit www.traveline.org.uk.

Can be linked with a visit to Bickleigh Vale Quarries (see separate entry in Register).

Site Owner: The National Trust.

References:

Born A. 1988. Blue Slate Quarrying in South Devon: An Ancient Industry. *Industrial Archaeology Review*. Vol.11 (1), pp.51-67.

Taylor, R T & Grainger, P (1996). Report on the Assessment of County Geological Sites in the South Hams. *ERC Report 96/25*. Earth Resources Centre, University of Exeter.

Thomas R. Bickleigh Vale Quarries. *Devon Archaeology*. Vol. 4, pp.28-32. Devon Archaeological Society.

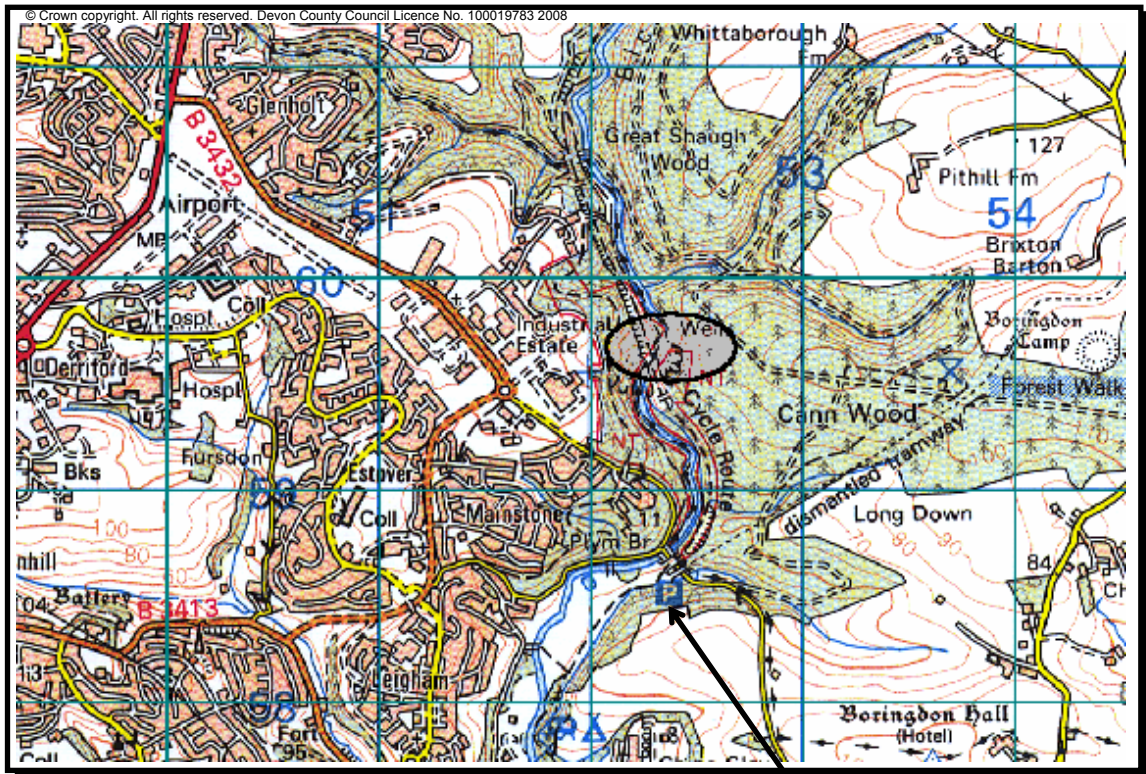
Ussher, W.A.E. 1912. The geology of the country around Ivybridge and Modbury. Memoirs of the Geological Survey, England and Wales. London, HMSO.

Detailed Geology: Upper Devonian slate: Smooth fissile grey slate with cleavage dipping due south at 54° . The lineation resulting from the intersection of bedding and cleavage can be seen in places. It plunges at $2-3^{\circ}$ east. Some of the slate shows crenulation folding and large open folds with near horizontal axes high on the face in the main bay of the quarry may be related. An elvan dyke intrudes the slate. It is divided, one part occurs high in the northern corner of the main bay. It is partly obscured but encloses a screen of slate about 2 m wide. The main elvan dyke has been quarried in a small bay on the north side of the main bay. It is about 10 m wide and dips south at about 65° with angle decreasing upwards. The rock is a creamy weathering felsite or microgranite. It contains micaceous granite inclusions up to 7 mm across. The upper contact is sharp but irregular in detail. There are traces of flow banding where the rock, is finer grained near the contact. A steep wooded slope on the south side of the entrance to the northern bay gives access to the top of the dyke where it encloses a screen of slate about 3 m long. A plate in Ussher (1912) shows the dyke when the quarry was working. The main northern bay of the quarry is in slate of uniform appearance. The site has historic interest in connection with the old Devonshire slate industry dating back to 1683. Parts of the slate dressing buildings have been preserved by the National Trust.

LOCATION PLAN

CANN QUARRY SPARKWELL, SOUTH HAMS

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Scale 1: 35,000



Site locality

Parking at
Plymbridge

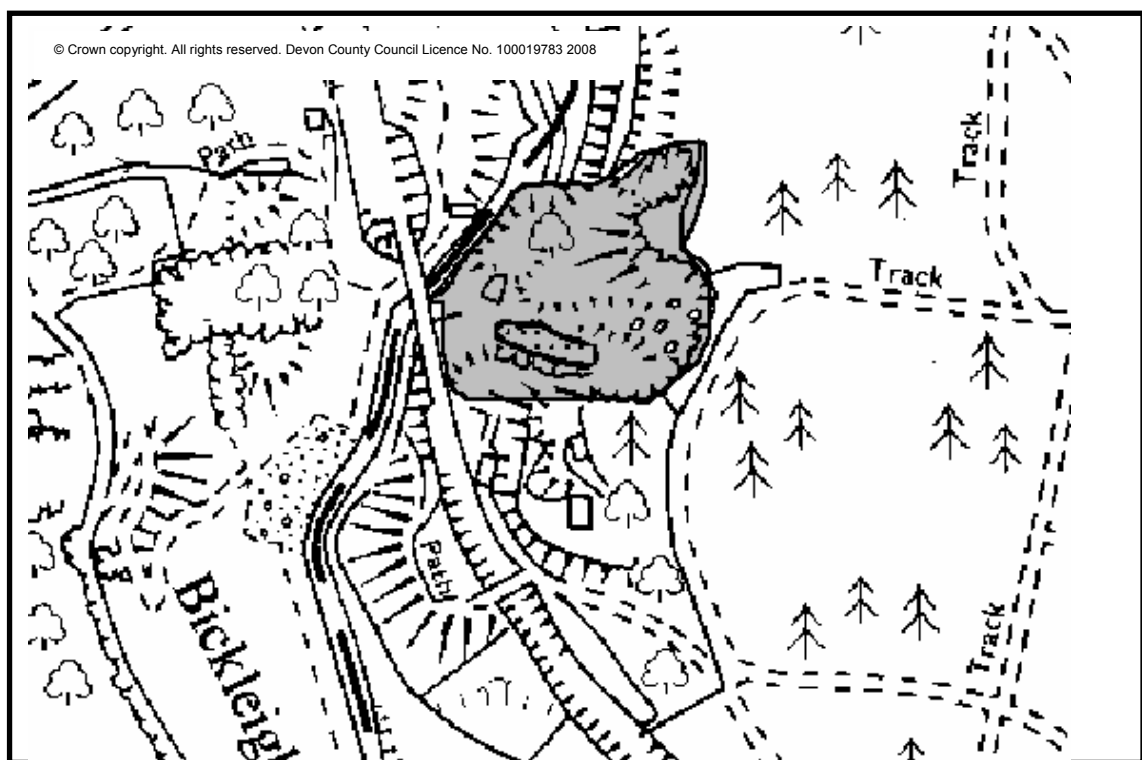
Parking and Access

- Parking for cars and minibuses at Plymbridge National Trust car park. To access site, walk along the canal path or the old railway cycle route for about 1km northwards.

SITE PLAN

CANN QUARRY SPARKWELL, SOUTH HAMS

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Approx. Extent of Site

Scale 1: 4,000

Main Points of Interest:

- A granite/microgranite dyke intruded into slates. The exposure of the dyke continues into Bickleigh Vale quarries to the west of the Plym.
- Smooth and grey slate with visible folding where the dyke has intruded.
- The site has historical importance as it was worked for slate as far back as 1683.