

Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group (WGCG)

Local Geological Site - LGS 80 Brailes Hill No 2 – Geomorphology, Update Aug 2019

Brief Description:

Hillside profile, reflecting underlying Lower and Middle Jurassic bedrock. The gently inclined clay lowlands surrounding the hill are underlain by early Jurassic clays (Blue Lias and Charmouth Mudstone Formations). The steeper, gorse-clad slopes reflect the silts and sands of the Dyrham Formation, capped by the Marlstone Rock Formation - a thin ironstone. Higher clay slopes (Whitby Mudstone) give way to another steep feature, formed by the Middle Jurassic Northampton Sand, overlain by the Grantham Formation and Chipping Norton Limestone.

MONITORING REPORT

Route to the Site:

- The site is situated on the Western flank of Brailes Hill and *can best be accessed via Roundhill Farmhouse and then, only with the owner's permission, via his private land which leads first to Brailes Hill 2 and then upwards to Brailes Hill No 1.
- To reach the Farm travelling from Shipston on Stour take the B4035 and head east for Upper Brailes. After approximately 1½ miles take a right hand turn into the entrance of **Roundhill Farmhouse**.
- The well surfaced entrance track leads directly to the farmyard. Beyond this, Brailes Hill No 2 can, with the owners permission, be approached via a somewhat steep and uneven track. This leads first to Brailes Hill No 2 and then onwards to Brailes Hill No 1.

* *A public right of way leads part of the way to the two sites but it is necessary to cross onto private land at some point if they are to be investigated fully.*

Access to the Site:

- On foot, the steep ascent would be long and arduous and in the shooting season quite out of the question. It is unlikely that permission would be given for an unescorted traverse of this land by the new owner at any time of the year.
- The owner generously provided us with an escort who welcomed us at the farmyard and then took us, first to the summit of Brailes Hill No1 in his off-road vehicle, and from thence down to Brailes Hill No. 2.
- The escort accompanied us throughout our inspection of both sites and through his intimate knowledge of the terrain, was able to identify most of the areas from which previous photographs had been taken.

Parking:

- Subject to the farm manager giving permission this can be done close to the yard but allowing proper consideration for machinery movements.

Future Access:

- In the light of fresh information proffered by our guide, regarding previously unseen limestone scarps and the habits of badgers, it was hoped that a return visit might be arranged at the turn of the year. It was undertaken to progress these hopes via the farm management and our Conservation Committee.

Physical Obstacles Making Access Difficult or Unsafe:

- None were noted, possibly due to our route and mode of transport.

Gates or Fences Enclosing the Site:

- None beyond the yard to impede our route

Interpretation Boards on the Site:

- There are none.

Grid References at the Site:

- No OS references were appended to previous photographs so direct 'now and then' comparisons could not therefore be made. However Mike Heath, helped by the farm manager felt able to visually identify and photograph previously identified features and Doug used an app on his mobile phone to add the appropriate OS grid references.

Water Level Changes:

- Not applicable at present but a mechanically excavated lake has been created in recent times and this may be worth monitoring in the future.

Conclusion

- As in 2014, the area is maintained for agricultural and sporting use but this seems not to have affected the geomorphology to any noticeable degree except at the lower level where the aforementioned lake has been formed. See accompanying Fig 3.

- The farm manager also pointed out the position of a previously unseen Chipping Norton Limestone outcrop, close to the lake and not previously recorded. It is hoped that both items can be investigated whenever a second visit can be arranged. Unfortunately this has had to be postponed because of the lockdown resulting from the Corona virus. This was continuing at the time of this Report being submitted.
- Shallow eroded valleys could be seen below the spring line at the junction of Brailes 1 and 2. See Figs 1 and 2 but these did not appear to have changed significantly since the last Report.
- *The farm manager, was our constant escort and gave much valuable information during our visit, including the habit badgers have of creating their setts in the softer soils below overhanging limestone scarps. Almost as useful an observation as the spring lines he was also able to point out along the way!*

PHOTOGRAPHS



Above, Figure 1 at 158 degrees, OS SP 29344 38936

Helpfully, the farm manager, took us directly to the positions from which the 2014 photographs were recorded. Those taken this year show a greener view from below the spring line than those taken previously. Other than that there was no obvious change in the previously reported geomorphological process at this point.



Left, Figure 2 at 244 degrees, OS SP 29399 39015

Looking across the Spring Line towards the shallow valleys being formed on Brailes No 1.

Below: Figure 3 at 012 degrees OS SP 29059 39294

Photograph taken across a mechanically formed lake on the lower slopes of Brailes Hill No 2. The Farm Manager pointed out that uphill from this point there was a well defined, but currently well hidden, outcrop of Chipping Norton Limestone signalled by a number of badger setts made beneath the outcrop in softer material. It was hoped that this could be investigated early in 2020 but this visit was postponed because of the lockdown resulting from the Corona virus. This was continuing at the time of this Report being submitted.



Link to Original LoGS (RIGS) document:

<http://lgs.wgcg.co.uk/LoGS80.pdf>

IMPORTANT

Visitors to LGS sites do so at their own risk and WGCG cannot accept responsibility for any injury, loss or damage which may occur.