

9 May 2017

Laugharne



The Boat House museum on the Taf estuary

Having said goodbye to Gareth, we were on our own for the homeward journey, and a visit in beautiful sunshine to Laugharne where Dylan Thomas spent the last years of his life and wrote 'Under Milk Wood' and 'Poem on his Birthday'. We visited the Boat House where he lived, now a small museum of his life. The size of the museum meant we had to go round in smaller groups, which gave the rest of us the excuse to use their excellent cafe for coffee with Welsh cakes or bara bread. Returning past his Writing Shed, which is perched on stilts on the cliff edge, we went in search of the Devonian Old Red Sandstone geology along the Taf estuary guided by the pages on the exposures below the Boat House out of Gareth's book, *The Geology of South Wales*.



Beaconites burrows



Intraformational conglomerate

After discovering Beaconites burrows on the beach at Freshwater West, we were very pleased to find them here too, spotting several vertical burrows in the delicate FU (Fining- Upwards we were told this meant) multi-storey sandstone. This FU is made up of parallel cross-bedded and ripple-laminated facies that merge together at times. The burrow pictured on the left was about 10cm across. We also found several in cross-section on the erosional base of the lowermost sandstone.

The burrows were found at a point in the cliff with a very interesting succession of layers. At the base, a thin bed of intraformational conglomerate, predominantly calcrete nodules (*above right*). Above this we found red mudstones with white calcretes and lots of grey coloured small burrows (either created by worms or by rootlets), together with ripple laminated silts. Above this was what Gareth in his book calls a 'complex sandbody'. At the base of this we found some lensoid sandstone stringers where the layer thins and tapers out along the horizontal before re-starting and widening. This is a sign of the changing course of the water flows typical of braided rivers (*see left*). Also in this layer we found some small dykes (photo below) and the abundant Beaconites burrows.



Lensoid sandstone stringers

Above this layer there were further red silty mudstones with abundant calcretes, but it became very difficult to see because of the quantity of vegetation on the cliffs.



Concoidal fractures

On the ground beside the path close to the river were very interesting smooth undulating shapes which were identified as concoidal fractures in the red sandstone beds (*see left*).

The tide was low, so much of the estuary was exposed mud with channels, and here we saw a Grey Heron, a few gulls and waders including Curlew and Redshank, a couple of Shelduck and on the shore a Rock Pipit.

Other places to enjoy in the sunshine were the church where Dylan Thomas is buried, and the ruins of a castle, originally built in 1116, renewed as a Norman stronghold in 1215 and then converted to a Tudor manor house in the 16th century.



Small dyke