

Swanworth Quarry – Dimension Stone

Background

Swanworth Quarry extracts stone from the same geological sequence as the dimension stone quarries on the Isle of Portland. Although primarily an aggregates quarry some block from the 'Pond Freestone' sequence has recently been selected and moved to our California dimension stone quarry where it is being processed into sawn products. However the stone beds at Swanworth are not nearly as competent as those on the Isle of Portland so suitable block supply is limited and has to be carefully selected.

The Portland limestone is softer than the Purbeck limestones so is more easily worked and lends itself to a broad range of products which we are keen to exploit and with the recent acquisition of a modern 'CAD' controlled dimension saw at California Quarry the demand for suitable block stone from Swanworth quarry has increased. Trials are well underway with some Portland limestone products already being supplied to customers.

The remaining reserve at Swanworth is heavily jointed and contaminated with clay bands which reduces the ability to provide good clean block. Importantly the stone in the proposed extension area for Swanworth quarry is of better quality and therefore the potential to use Swanworth block as dimension stone would be greatly improved.

The below pictures illustrate the above.



1. Middle bench with 'Pond Freestone' running through centre. This bed produces block stone suitable for use as dimension stone. Tight bedding joints and clay staining mean the block available is much smaller than would be found on the Isle of Portland.



2. Selected block ready for transportation to California Quarry.



3. Block being 'squared up' on the saw at California.



4. 1 of 3 Stone plinth base cut ready for supply to Joscelyn Builders



5. Cut tiles ready for polishing



6. Cut and polished Swanworth limestone Pond Freestone wall tiles



7. Packaged ready for supply to private customer

The quarry has received a significant order for the supply of a 'plinth course' in Swanworth limestone to the front of Swanage lifeboat station.