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## Ramsay's grave RIGS site

NRW RIGS no. 187 [SH 55395 75885]

[GeoMôn Global Geopark original webpage](#)

### RIGS Statement of Interest:

Ramsay's grave RIGS site has been selected to commemorate his outstanding contribution to the understanding of the geology of North Wales. Andrew Crombie Ramsay was the third Director General of the British Geological Survey. He was born in Glasgow on January 31st, 1814 and joined the Geological Survey as an assistant in 1841. From 1842 he was first involved with and then supervised work in North Wales resulting in the 1"-scale Geological Maps which were completed in 1852 with the issue of the five Anglesey sheets. These were accompanied by the Geological Survey Memoir *The Geology of North Wales* (1st ed. 1866; 2nd ed. 1881). He was appointed to the Chair of Geology at University College London in 1848 and served as President of the Geological Society from 1862–64. In 1871 he was made Director General of the Survey in succession to Sir Roderick Murchison and Sir Henry de la Beche. He held this office until he retired in 1881, in which year he was knighted. He was awarded the Wollaston Medal and Royal Medal of the Royal Society. After retirement he settled with his wife Louise at Beaumaris, Anglesey, where he died on December 9th, 1891. His main books, apart from the Survey Memoirs, are *The Old Glaciers of Switzerland and North Wales* (1860) and *Physical Geology and Geography of Great Britain* (1878). His nephew William Ramsay was a distinguished chemist who first discovered the elements argon and helium in the Earth's atmosphere, and later went on to discover the other inert gases krypton, neon and xenon. Ramsay is buried in the churchyard at Llansadwrn Church. His gravestone consists of an erratic of Lower Carboniferous limestone, assigned to the Dinantian (Asbian) as it contains the single coral *Dibunophyllum*, as well as some Productid brachiopods and some isolated crinoid ossicles. It is unlikely that the erratic has travelled more than six miles, as similar limestone outcrops occur along the coast to the north-east at Lligwy and as far south as Penmon. The country rock beneath the grave is Precambrian green-coloured schist, described by Ramsay as 'metamorphosed Cambrian'. Ramsay was buried in Llansadwrn churchyard where family members were for some time rectors in that parish. His great nephew, the foremost Welsh painter Sir Kyffin Williams R.A., O.B.E., takes a great interest in the local geology and is an associate member of Gwynedd and Môn RIGS Group.

**Geological setting/context:** There are three main categories of RIGS selected for their historical importance: 1. Historical constructions (arbitrarily up to 2,000 years old) and/or archaeological constructions (arbitrarily more than 2,000 years old) where rock has been used and where the relevance of geology can be demonstrated. This type of RIGS can include castles, churches, ruins, lanes, walls, cromlechs and standing stones; 2. Sites or features related to the development of geological thought and the development of geology as a science, such as sites where certain concepts or theories were developed or types of feature first explained (e.g. Hutton's Unconformity); 3. RIGS commemorating the work and contributions of important geologists. These usually take the form of a monument (such as a grave) or memorial.

**Network context of this site:** It is one of a series of monuments in Anglesey adopted and cared for by members of Gwynedd and Môn RIGS Group. These sites include the grave of Edward Greenly (1861–1951) at Langristiolus, and the memorial plaque on Rhoscolyn Headland to Dennis Stephenson Wood (1934–2001). They deserve to be remembered for their outstanding contributions to British and Welsh geology.

### References:

RAMSAY, A.C. (1860). *The Old Glaciers of Switzerland and North Wales*. Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, London, 116pp.

RAMSAY, A.C. (1866, 1881). *The Geology of North Wales*. Memoir of the Geological Survey of Great Britain. H.M.S.O., London, 381pp.

