

## CORK - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Ballycummisk Mine</b>		
Other names used for site	Ballycomisk, Ballycummich, Ballycummish		
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH15 Economic Geology, IGH6 Mineralogy</b>		
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Ballycummisk</b>		
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Ballydehob</b>		
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>140</b>		
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>497600E 532260N</b>		
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>GIS CODE</b>	<b>CK011</b>		

### **Outline Site Description**

Part-grassy, part-heathland site on side of small river valley overlooking coastline.

### **Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**

Mineralized quartz veins within Upper Devonian purple mudstone and siltstone of the Castlehaven Formation.

### **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

Ballycummisk Mine was initially worked between 1811 and 1825 but its heyday was in the period 1857 to 1877 when it was one of the most profitable mines in West Cork, producing over 6,000 tonnes of ore at a grade of up to 10 % copper. The underground workings extended to c. 400 m and included seven levels and four shafts, while on the surface were two steam engines, crushers, office and workshops.

The site today can be subdivided into two parts, each centred around a large waste heap, one to the northeast and the other the southwest. The northeastern part is now wholly overgrown by heath, principally gorse, although the overgrown remains of a shaft can be seen immediately beside the road at the northeastern extremity of the site. Extant surface remains of mining can be seen on the southwestern part of the site where two faces of a large spoil heap are well exposed. Beside it, two large stone-built pillar-like structures and several smaller concrete ones are the most obvious building remains on the site. They resemble supports for unidentified mine structures, perhaps for hoisting or loading ore. The quartz-rich mine waste contains visible copper ore, mainly chalcopyrite but also tetrahedite-tennantite.

### **Site Importance – County Geological Site**

Ballycummisk Mine is probably the most significant of the West Cork copper mines outside of the Allihies district. While much of the site is now obscured, the largest waste heap is well exposed and contains significant amounts of mineralized vein quartz, likely to be of interest to mineralogists and others studying the origin of the West Cork copper mineralization.

### **Management/promotion issues**

A Fastnet Trails signboard attached to a farm gate on the southern side of the site provides a short history of the site along with a map and section of the workings. The signboard notes that the site is private property with no access. However, much of the site can be readily observed from the minor public roads that bound it on three sides. Ballycummisk was surveyed as part of the GSI-EPA HMS-IRC project in 2007 when the northeastern waste heap was still exposed. Since then, the southwestern heap has also become more overgrown and vegetation has begun to obscure what remains of the mine buildings. The site does not require further promotion but would benefit from conservation measures to preserve as much as possible of the existing mining remains.



View eastwards of Ballycumisk Mine site, with exposed face of waste heap on left and extant mine building remnants on right.



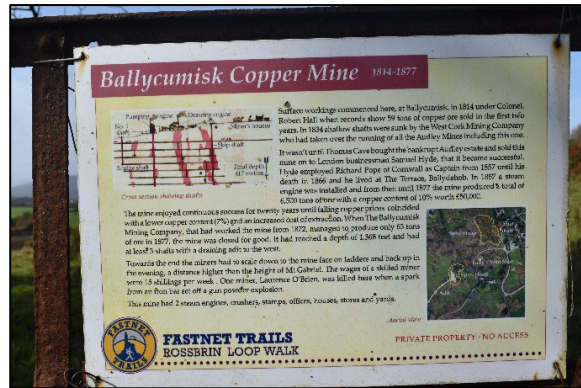
Extant pillar-like mine buildings at southwestern end of site, photographed in 2007.



Pillar-like mine buildings at southwestern end of site, showing overgrowth by vegetation (mainly ivy) since 2007.



Northeastern end of site showing complete overgrowth of mine waste heap.



Fastnet Trails signboard on southern side of site.



