

## CORK - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Benduff Slate Quarry</b>		
Other names used for site	Benduff Landfill Site, Ben Duff Landfill		
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH15 Economic Geology</b>		
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Benduff</b>		
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Rosscarbery</b>		
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>134</b>		
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>525925E 538400N (remaining chimney)</b>		
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>GIS CODE</b>	<b>CK021</b>		

### **Outline Site Description**

Benduff Slate Quarry is a disused quarry approximately 3 km northwest of Rosscarbery, that was one of three pits that formed the famous Rosscarbery Slate Quarries of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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

The bedrock is flaser-bedded sandstone and mudstone of both the Old Head Sandstone Formation and the overlying Narrow Cove Member of the Kinsale Formation. The former is Devonian in age (419-359 million years ago) and the latter is of Lower Carboniferous (Mississippian) age (359-323 million years ago).

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

The Rosscarbery Slate Quarries were West Cork's largest slate quarries and gave employment to many throughout the nineteenth century - over 200 were working there around 1850. Workable slate deposits were first discovered at Benduff around 1812 by chance, during construction of the Cork to Skibbereen road. At Benduff the workings were at the surface, in two separate pits.

Benduff Quarry was opened as an entity in 1830 and it provided employment for about 150 men up to 1892. By that year, quarrying had undermined a large hanging wall mass, and though its stability was monitored closely, it collapsed suddenly on July 20, 1892, killing seven men and one boy - the bodies of five of them were never recovered. The quarry went into decline after the accident, eventually being liquidated, though the Munster and Leinster Bank, one of the creditors, took it over and worked it up to 1911. Operations resumed in 1919 and continued to operate until 1950 when it finally closed.

Two chimneys were erected on site to service plant, though only one now remains, and it is unclear what the layout / function of these were. This building and chimney obviously fell into disuse during quarrying operations, as waste slate is carefully stacked within remaining wall ruins, and there is a very prominent "high tide" waste mark clearly visible about half-way up the height of the chimney.

From 1978 to 2003 the eastern part of the quarry was used as a landfill site. Following detailed studies in the early 2000s it was determined that this could all be capped and sealed, and the environmental clean-up and capping operation began in 2004. When completed, a memorial garden to the memory of those who died in 1892 was erected. The site shows how the use, re-use, misuse and reclamation of natural resources is a transient, ever-changing and never-ending process.

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

The site is an important part of the Industrial History and Heritage of Cork, demonstrating the importance of geology to the economic lives of people and of the buildings that form part of society. It is well documented and fully deserves to be protected and recognised as a County Geological Site.

### **Management/promotion issues**

What's left of the quarry is set within a deep, open pit which is surrounded on three sides by woodland. The reclaimed landfill portion of the site is fenced off, and the only portion of the land

not privately owned is the memorial garden. The quarry is not suitable for general promotion without significant interventions.



The chimney and old quarry buildings at Benduff Slate Quarry, viewed from the southeast.



The remaining chimney, with landfill monitoring points adjacent.

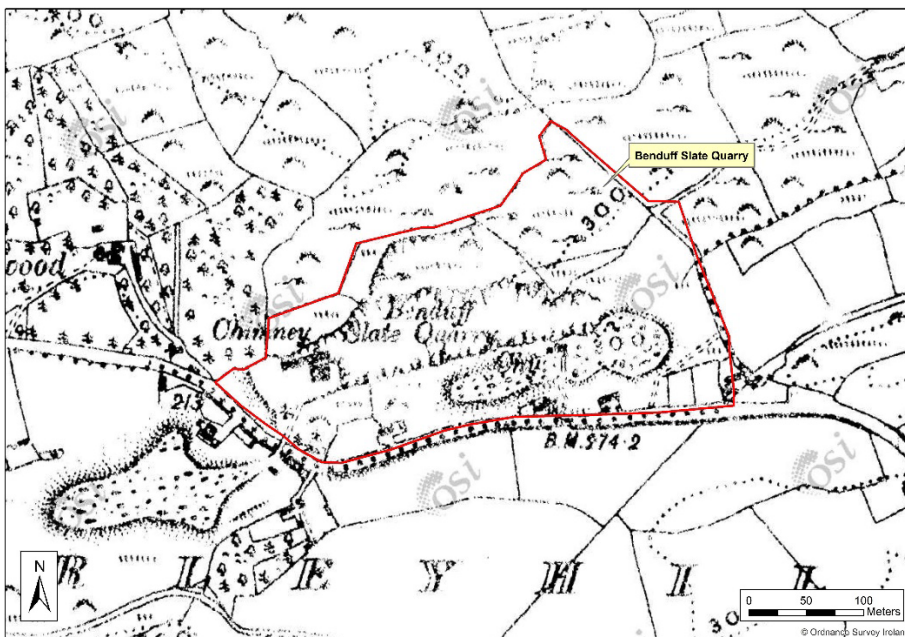
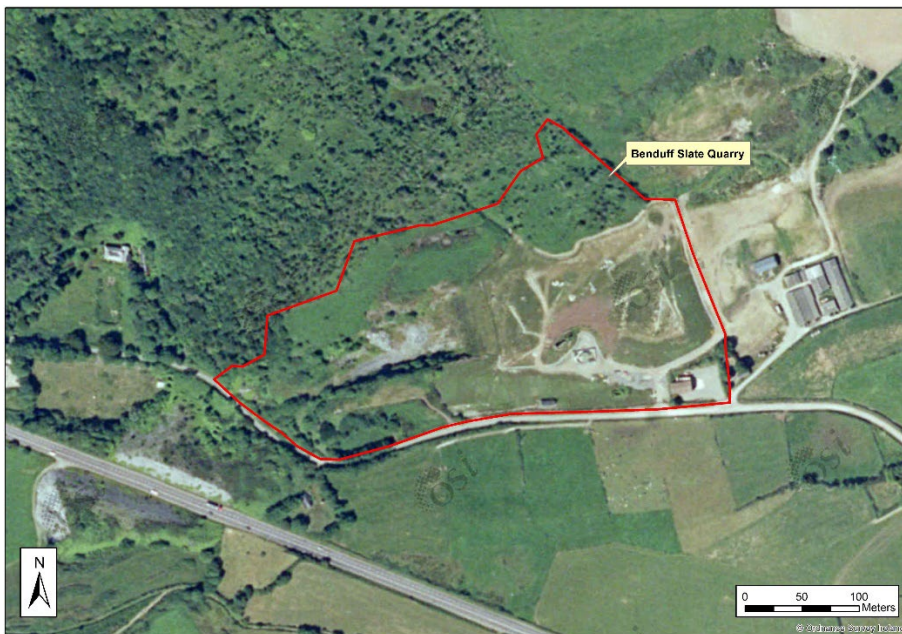
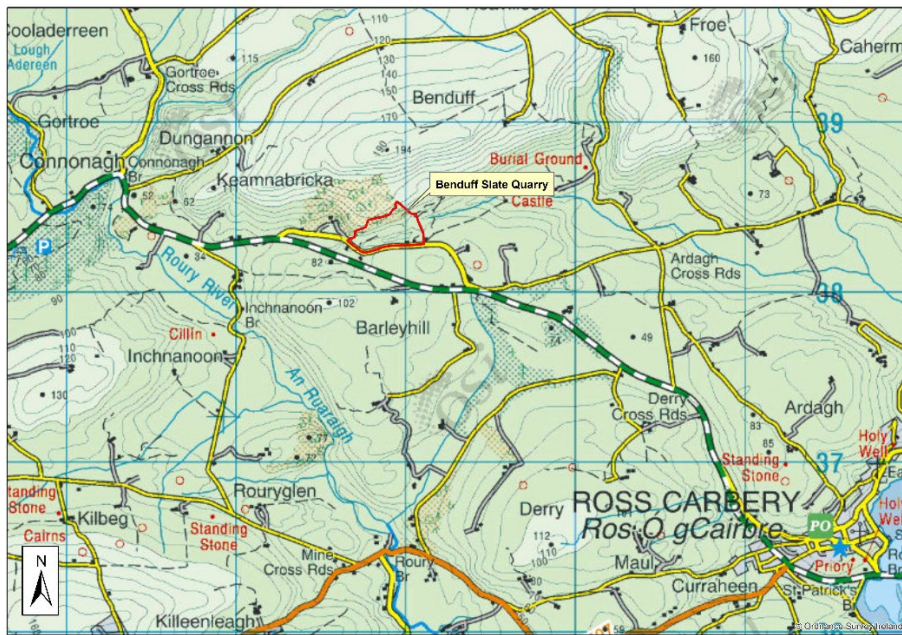


The memorial plaque at the quarry.



The remaining quarry pit at the west of the site, where slate is still seen.





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**BENDUFF  
 SLATES.**  
 —♦—  
**FIRST PRIZE MEDAL**  
 —♦—  
**CORK EXHIBITION**  
 OF 1883.  
 —♦—  
 Certificate at Dublin  
 Exhibition of 1882.  
 —♦—  
**THE  
 EXTENSIVE  
 WORKS**  
 GOING ON AT  
**THE QUARRY**  
 HAVE INCREASED THE PRODUCTION

An advertisement for Benduff Slates from the Southern Star of 1883.

Apply to  
**MANAGER,**  
 AT BENDUFF QUARRY,  
**ROSSCABERY;**  
 OR TO,  
*Manager, at Desert Depot.*  
 OR TO,  
**J. SWANTON,**  
**EASTVIEW, GLANDORE,**  
**COUNTY CORK.**  
 92211297AZ.

A job advert for Quarry Manager in 1898, six years after the tragic accident in the pit.