

## CORK - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Courtmacsherry Estuary</b>
Other names used for site	Courtmacsherry Bay
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH13 Coastal Geomorphology</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Burren, Garranefeen, Glanduff, Garranereagh</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Courtmacsherry, Timoleague, Kilbrittain</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>123, 124, 136</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>551900E 543450N (centre of site)</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>86</b> <b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 25</b>
<b>GIS CODE</b>	<b>CK039</b>

### Outline Site Description

The Courtmacsherry Estuary is a wide estuarine / bay complex, comprising the drowned valley of the Argideen River, with many bounding areas of tidal mudflats exposed at low tide, and bounding headlands.

### Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The tidal mudflats and strandflats within the estuary and bay have been formed in the Holocene Period since the last glaciation. It is likely that the macro-structure of the bay dates back through the Quaternary (Ice Age) to the Tertiary Period.

### Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The coastline around Courtmacsherry forms the most convoluted of the marine inlets in Cork, and is almost 10 km long from Wood Point at the mouth of Courtmacsherry Bay, to Inchy Bridge on the Argideen River. The entrance to the bay is a wide embayment leading to two winding entrance channels 3 and 10 km in length, along the Kilbrittain Stream and Argideen River, respectively.

Courtmacsherry Estuary is in a tidal channel meander opening into Coolmain Bay. The estuary of the Argideen River joins from the west, with wide tidal mudflats at low tide. The Kilbrittain stream flows southward through a muddy estuary on the eastern side, constricted by sandspits. These have formed in two stages, with an inner and an outer spit. The outer spit, with grassy dunes, is backed by a broad salt marsh in Garranefeen Bay, where peat sequences have been studied.

Saltmarshes have developed in places around the estuary, and embryonic sand dunes occur in a number of places also, including Garranefeen, Flaxfort Strand and near Courtmacsherry. Sandy and shingle beaches and reedbeds are also present.

### Site Importance – County Geological Site

Courtmacsherry Estuary is an impressive locality and the associated estuarine mudflat, strandflat, beach, dune and marsh features, as well as the surrounding headlands, make the estuary a textbook locality for the recognition of coastal erosion and deposition features.

### Management/promotion issues

The location of the bay means it is easily accessible, and the R601 and R602 roads around its perimeter give excellent views over the locality. An information board at the viewing points in Timoleague and Courtmacsherry might prove worthy additions to the site, explaining the formation of the features and their associated habitats, flora and fauna. The site is already an SAC (001230, Courtmacsherry Estuary) and much of it is also a proposed NHA for biodiversity reasons and the geodiversity of the locality should be highlighted in any promotion of this.



Courtmacsherry Estuary, viewed from the high ground in Timoleague Village.



Flaxfort Strand just north of Courtmacsherry, exposed when the tide recedes.



Garranefeen Strand.



Low estuarine sand island at high tide in the Kilbrittain Stream Estuary at Garranefeen.

