

CORK - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Laharran Quarry		
Other names used for site	Tracton Quarry		
IGH THEME	IGH6 Mineralogy		
TOWNLAND(S)	Laharran, Knocknamanagh		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Minane Bridge		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	99		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	574670E 556500N (floor of quarry)		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	87	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	25
GIS CODE	CK061		

Outline Site Description

Laharran Quarry is a small, abandoned quarry, split in two by a road and now overgrown with trees, approximately 400 m southeast of the crossroads at Minane Bridge.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks at Laharran Quarry are pyritic cherty mudstones, with dolomites, of the Minane Chert Member of the Lispatrick Formation, which is of Lower Carboniferous (Mississippian) age (359-323 million years ago).

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Laharran Quarry is a barely noticeable feature, being made up of two small (2 m to 4 m deep) and subtle roadside depressions, but is an exceptionally important site historically.

The pit faces are barely visible, but the bedrock walls of the depression contain wavellite, which is an aluminium phosphate mineral with the chemical formula $\text{Al}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2(\text{OH}, \text{F})_3 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$. Distinct crystals or spheres of wavellite are rare, and it normally occurs as translucent green radial or spherical clusters. Wavellite is sometimes used as a gemstone.

At Laharran Quarry, spheres and rosettes of wavellite occur as radiating crystals, and perfect spheres up to 16 mm across may be encountered. They have been given World Class status by the Hudson Institute for Mineralogy, a North American Institute dedicated to the discovery, study and preservation of mineral species and their history, and to increasing public awareness and appreciation of the mineral kingdom through outreach and education. The majority of the wavellite can be found at the southwestern corner of the northern limb of Laharran Quarry, and is hosted in softer clay.

Goniatite (*Ammonellipsites* sp.) fossils have also been found in the quarry and suggest a Lower Carboniferous Courceyan age for the host rock.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The outcrops at the site form part of the youngest rocks in the Ringabella Syncline. As the site has historically yielded fantastic mineral specimens it is worthy of County Geological Site status but it may also be considered for NHA designation under the IGH6 Mineralogy theme, despite that fact that little can be seen extant at surface in the locality nowadays.

Management/promotion issues

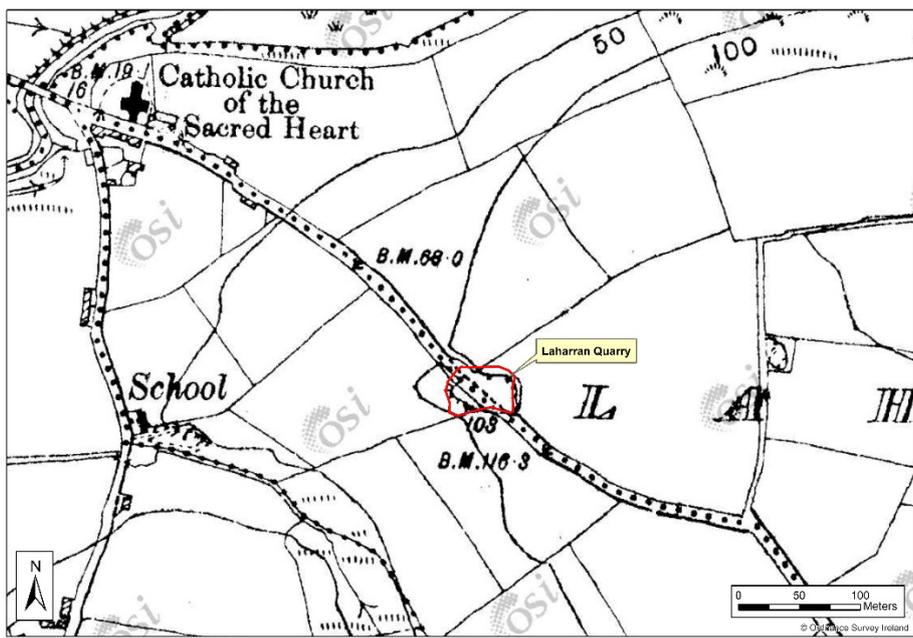
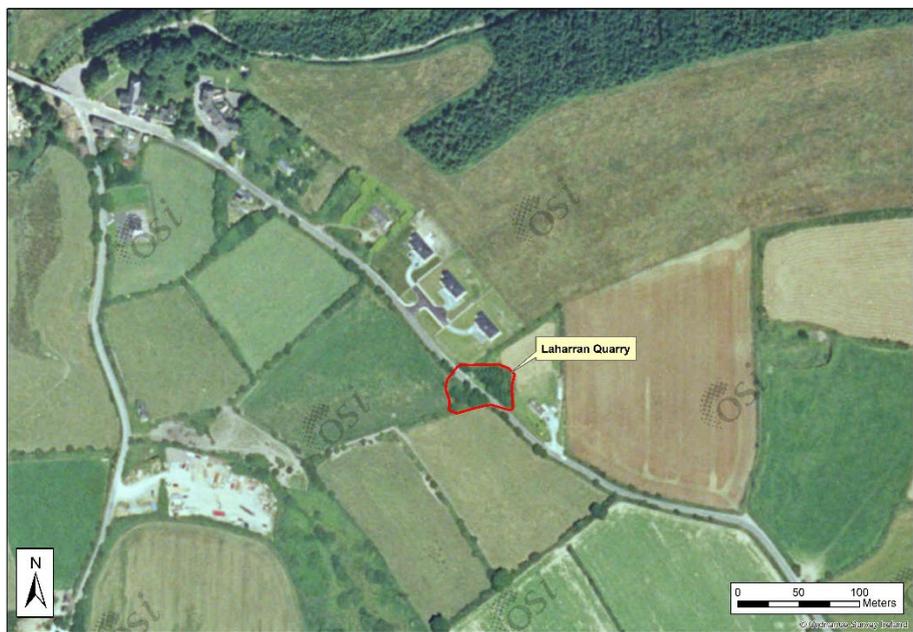
The site is part of two overgrown, scrub-dominated localities on either side of the road, and is difficult to navigate on foot. In a sense the current abandoned and overgrown state of the site helps preserve this important mineral locality and any mineral specimens remaining in the bedrock. The site is not suitable for promotion as is, but a signboard explaining the uniqueness of the specimens found locally (but not giving the exact location) at nearby Minane Bridge might be a worthy addition to the locality.



Laharran Quarry, northern portion.



The area where wavellite can be sourced, at the western end of the northern outcrop wall.





Some of the wavellite specimens sourced historically at Laharran Quarry (source: www.mindat.org)