

CAVAN- COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Redhills		
Other names used for site	Claragh		
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology		
TOWNLAND(S)	Claragh		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Redhills		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	7		
ITM CO-ORDINATE	646877E 815675N		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	27	GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	8/9

Outline Site Description

The site is a small, partly overgrown excavation into small hillside exposure, containing a number of exposed faces that are the remains of 19th-century mining. The site is in use for cattle pasture and feeding.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks exposed are red, ferruginous shales of the Ordovician Coronea Formation, part of the Northern Belt of the Longford-Down inlier.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The site is one of three in the Redhills area where the red shales of the Coronea Formation were mined for iron in the 19th century. The other sites are at Kilnacross, 600m southwest across the Redhills–Cootehill road, and Carrigmore, a further 2.6km southwest, some 1.8km north of Ballyhaise. While red shales can be seen to crop out at Kilnacross, the Carrigmore site appears to be reclaimed to farmland.

The original Fe content of the red shales at Claragh is 5–7% but local enrichment occurred, under conditions of faulting and folding, to produce a low-grade ore containing 17–24% soluble iron. The rock is broken up by a dense network of joint planes along which Fe enrichment has occurred. The ore is composed mainly of hematite (Fe₂O₃).

The Redhills Mining Company first worked the deposit in 1872, producing c. 5,000 tonnes by June of that year, but by 1878 production had ceased because of the high silica content of the ore. The Redhills Syndicate investigated the deposit in detail in 1959-60 but the estimated 68,000 tonnes of ore at an average grade of 20% was insufficient to warrant further development.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; may be recommended for Geological NHA

The Redhills iron deposits have some significance as one of the few mineral deposits of any description in County Cavan. The Claragh site is the best remaining exposure and as such warrants CGS status.

Management/promotion issues

The site is in continuous use for keeping cattle and not readily accessible as a consequence. Exposure is limited to a few faces and a considerable portion of the original site, as defined on historical maps, is overgrown by shrubs and trees. Consideration should be given to clearing and fencing off a section of the site to preserve the excavations and allow access.



View of Redhills mine (quarry) from north



