

FINGAL - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Fancourt Shore
Other names used for site	Balbriggan
IGH THEME:	IGH 2, 4 (Precambrian to Devonian Palaeontology, Cambrian - Silurian)
TOWNLAND(S)	Kilsough North
NEAREST TOWN	Balbriggan
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	Dublin 5
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	321700 262750 = O21700 62750
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	43 1/2 inch Sheet No. 13

Outline Site Description

Coastal cliffs and foreshore.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Silurian slates and greywacke sandstones.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

A coastal section of rocks at Fancourt, south of Balbriggan town, has yielded the most complete succession of Irish Silurian rocks dated by the graptolite fossils within them. This makes it an important reference section against which other fossiliferous sites and sections can be compared. The sequence includes upper Ordovician *anceps* Biozone graptolitic black shales, in faulted contact with the Silurian succession. Whilst not every single Silurian graptolite biozone is recognisable, due to local faulting, a nearly complete succession from the basal Llandovery *acuminatus* Biozone to the Wenlock *lundgreni* Biozone has been established.

Site Importance

The site is promoted here as a County Geological Site but it has also been put forward for NHA designation by NPWS on account of the completeness of the graptolite fossil succession. Most localities with graptolites in Ireland tend to represent snapshots of one particular time and graptolite zone.

Management/promotion issues

This site is publicly accessible as it is nearly all foreshore, although it is only safely reached when the tide is out. Due to the arduous work required to extract graptolites, and their relatively unexciting appearance except to the specialist, this site is unlikely to raise general public interest and should probably remain as a scientific reference site.



Left: A view from the northern margin of the site to the south.
Right: A view from the southern margin of the site looking north.

Fancourt Shore

