

GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Aughrim Bog
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary, IGH16 Hydrogeology
TOWNLAND(S)	Monasternalea, Knockaunarainy, Clooncannon, Aghrane
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Ballygar
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	33
ITM CO-ORDINATES	577500E 756300N (centre of bog)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 40	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 12

Outline Site Description

Aughrim Bog comprises an extensive area of peatland in a long, northwest to southeast oriented depression, approximately 4 kilometres northwest of Ballygar.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Aughrim Bog is situated within an area dominated by bedrock of Lower Carboniferous limestone. The bog peat is Quaternary in age, having formed in marshy conditions as an extensive envelope of the landscape in the area since deglaciation, and mostly approximately 7,000-10,000 years ago.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

While today a generally flat and open landscape, the locality of Aughrim Bog was covered by bog, marsh, quicksand and ponds thousands of years ago as the bog formed. The site today comprises a high, domed, raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is bounded in parts by belts of coniferous forestry both to the south and north.

The site is partially divided by old tracks and associated drains that run across the high bog. There is an area of hummocks and pools in the middle and west of the high bog and a section at the centre of this area is wet and quaking with a flush present. In the northwest of the site there is a small area of coniferous forestry on high bog. Cutover is found on the north of the site and around the southwest lobe; at the four corners of the site the cutover has been utilised for forestry.

The bog itself comprises partially decomposed vegetation, which sank into marshland within the wide, wet basin. This material was laid layer upon layer for thousands of years, as the fibrous peat formed and eventually decayed into amorphous organic material over time.

The locality was therefore gradually covered by the rising bogland, which formed a dome-shaped, 'raised' bog. Other features of peat interest are included within the site boundary, such as intact and drained peat, peat cut by locals, wetlands and recovering peat.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

Aughrim Bog has been designated an NHA (site code 001227), as the various forms of peat are all accessible within a small locality. As the bog exists due to the geological and hydrogeological process of peat growth, the locality is ranked as a County Geological Site. This site supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummock/hollow complexes, pools and flushes.

Management/promotion issues

Damaging activities associated with land use across Aughrim Bog include drainage throughout the site and burning of the high bog. All these activities have resulted in the loss of habitat, damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability. The intact portion of the bog dome should be preserved as much as possible.



The main dome of Aughrim Bog, surrounded by coniferous forestry at the edges.



Reclaimed, wet grassland at the eastern edge of the bog.



Coniferous forestry at the northwestern edge of the feature.



Hummocks on the intact bog surface, dominated by *Sphagnum* moss 'cushions'.

