GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE Other names used for site IGH THEME TOWNLAND(S) NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE SIX INCH MAP NUMBER ITM CO-ORDINATES 1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 45 **Curraghduff Middle**

IGH15 Economic Geology Curraghduff Middle, Curraghduff West Oughterard 39 506110E 747970N GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 11

Outline Site Description

A partly overgrown former mine site on hillside, bounded by forestry and rough pasture.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Dalradian Lakes Marble Formation at its contact with the overlying Ballynakill Schist Formation. The mineralization is hosted by interbedded marble, psammite and amphibolite.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Curraghduff Middle is the site of the most extensive old mine site in the Glann mineralized belt, which includes the Derroura sites to the west and those of Barratleva to the east. Mining appears to have taken place mainly in the 19th century, ceasing around 1850. The site includes two small open pits, two collapsed shafts, an adit and extensive waste heaps with abundant examples of mineralization. The strike of the lode was approximately east-west over a distance of c. 70 m. The open pits lie at either end of the strike length, separated by 30-40 m of unexcavated ground where the lode was apparently "lost". An adit was driven from the north in an attempt to intersect the lode between the open pits, apparently without success. Both the eastern open pit and the adit are flooded. The western open pit contains an outcrop of mineralized quartz vein and mineralized amphibolite.

Mineralization is hosted in altered and fractured marble, psammite and amphibolite of the Lakes Marble Formation, and in quartz veins that cut them. Pyrite and chalcopyrite are the main sulphides present in waste rock, principally in quartz vein material. Scheelite was identified by modern exploration in the 1970s, occurring in fractures and veins in skarn (altered marble) and in massive quartz veins.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

There are numerous small mine sites in the Connemara Dalradian, generally dating from the 19th century, but this site is one of the best and most accessible examples. The extensive waste heaps are an excellent source of mineralized material. This is a significant County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

The site is not within any conservation or protected area. It is reached by a minor road that terminates at Curraghduff Farm where alpacas are now being bred as a tourist attraction, with the possibility of developing walking routes in the area. The site lies above the farm. Land around it is for sheep and cattle grazing. The ongoing development of the alpaca farm as a tourist attraction may offer the possibility of including information about the mine site, e.g. through information leaflets and signboards on the farm or along walking routes.



View westwards from eastern end of western open pit.



Close-up of quartz vein at eastern end of western open pit, showing pyrite mineralization (above coin).



Pyrite mineralization in quartz vein sample from waste heap.



View from eastern side of eastern open pit towards waste heaps on western side.

