

GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Derrylea Road Cutting
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH5 Precambrian
TOWNLAND(S)	Derrylea
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Clifden
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	23
ITM CO-ORDINATES	471045E 749680N (centre of cutting)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 37	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 10

Outline Site Description

A long rock cutting on the north side of the N59 adjacent to Derrylea Lough.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rock exposed in the cutting is part of the Lakes Marble Formation within the Dalradian succession of Connemara. The formation is composed of a range of metamorphosed sedimentary rocks, which are now pelitic schists, quartzites and calc-silicate schists.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Lakes Marble Formation is part of the Dalradian succession of Connemara, and it is well exposed along this recently excavated road cutting. The cutting provides a good representative section and shows detail of the strata and cross cutting veins and faults. The original interest at Derrylea was in localised mineralisation. Lead, zinc, iron, copper and gold minerals are present, along with baryte but apparently dispersed in the strata. Rusty stains on the face indicate weathering of the iron minerals, probably pyrite. Historical records suggest there was working for gold here, but a more modern study before the N59 road scheme was started showed only some short trial adits and very little evidence of actual mining having taken place. Furthermore, an industrial heritage of causeway, damned and diverted lakes, water wheel pits and buildings associated with investment in mining infrastructure, was identified and reported on for the road scheme. The report on this site including all the industrial heritage is available in 'Extracting Galway@ on www.mhti.com.

The industrial heritage is still extant to the south of the County Geological Site defined here but the short trial adits and workings were destroyed in the road widening project. The extended face in the new cutting is effectively all new.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The very long cutting, despite having steel mesh on much of the face is worthy of County Geological Site status as a good representative site for a significant formation in the Dalradian succession of Connemara.

Management/promotion issues

Despite the steel mesh to protect the road from falling rocks (as the face is steep) it is feasible to see both detail and gross patterns. As it is of somewhat specialised interest, and for road safety concerns it is not a site to promote, other than perhaps with an explanatory signboard on the cycle/footpath on the lake side of the roadway.



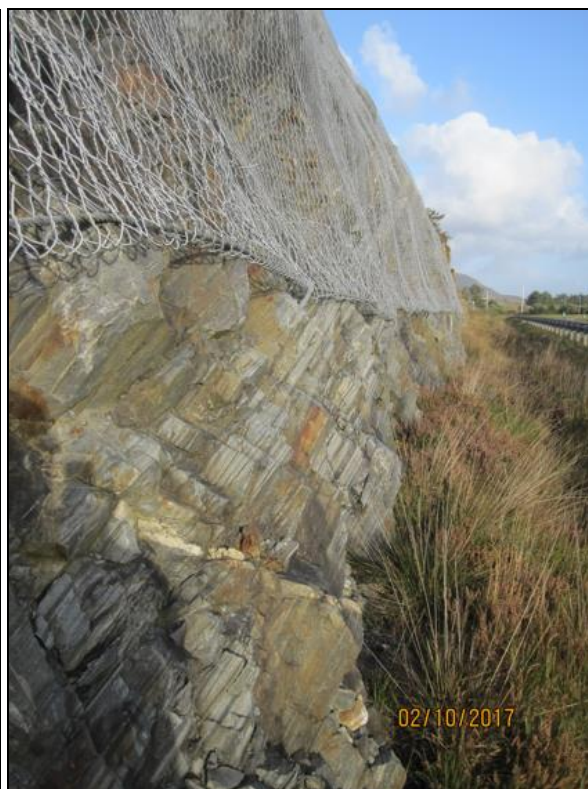
The Derrylea Road Cutting in panorama view from the cycle path beside the lake.



The Derrylea Road Cutting in panorama view from the causeway to the old 'mine works'.



Left: The Derrylea Road Cutting metal netting has done its work in containing this rock fall.



Right: The laminated and thinly bedded metasediments are seen at the base of the cliff.

