

GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Derryoobar Blast Furnace
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Derryoobar East
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Woodford
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	132
ITM CO-ORDINATES	575025E 696107N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 53	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 10

Outline Site Description

The standing remains of a blast furnace for iron smelting.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The blast furnace remains are of historical importance and were possibly built around 1721, but certainly before 1830 when they appear on the first Ordnance Survey of Ireland six inch to the mile map.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The blast furnace remains are of historical importance, possibly built around 1721 by Lord Eyre (of Eyre Square fame in Galway City). Whilst most of the other remaining blast furnaces from the iron smelting industry in this district are in Co. Clare, Derryoobar East's remains are the sole Galway representative. The Woodford region of East Galway was once an important centre for iron working. Other industries such as charcoal making and stripping oak bark for tanning took place. The oak was mostly sourced locally in Slieve Aughty. Iron ore was from pockets of bog iron in the upland landscape. Iron furnaces such as Derryoobar are distinguished from similar limekilns by having two openings rather than one.

The lack of slag surrounding the blast furnace, plus the lack of any apparent power source such as a waterwheel, to drive bellows, suggests that this furnace may have been built but never used. A detailed conservation survey was undertaken in 2015 and is available here:

<https://www.furnaceproject.org/uploads/2/3/6/6/23664026/derryoobarreport.pdf>

However, its recommendations were not yet acted upon.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The architectural importance of the building is matched by its representation of an important iron smelting industry in the district in the 1700s, which was of course founded in the geological availability of (poor) iron ore sources as bog iron ore. Recognition as a County Geological Site may help protect the building from further deterioration.

Management/promotion issues

The blast furnace is on private farmland and there is no access without landowner permission. Serious vegetation overgrowth has occurred in the time since the 2015 architectural conservation report noted above. The building will only deteriorate further without intervention.



Michael Walsh in front of Derryoover Blast Furnace.



Derryoover Blast Furnace from the west side.

