

GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Dunmore Esker
Other names used for site	Dunmore-Ballyhaunis Esker System
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Kildaree, Flaskagh More, Flaskagh Beg, Drumbane, Shrule, Quarter, Ballgh East, Ballagh West, Ballymoney South, Menus Park, Pollaphuca, Menus, Knockaunnagat, Roy, Kilnaslieve, Gardenfield, Graigueachullaire, Grange, Ienamore, Castletown, Meelick West, Masmore, Carrowbaun, Carnaun, Curraghaun, Carrownagarry, Kilcreevanty
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Dunmore
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	5, 6, 16, 17, 29
ITM CO-ORDINATES	547725E 761500N (centre of ridge, SW of Dunmore)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 39	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 11

Outline Site Description

The Dunmore Esker includes a number of high, sinuous ridge segments, which all form part of the same, extensive esker system which runs along a southwest to northeast orientation through the town of Dunmore, in northeast Galway. This esker forms a part of Dunmore-Ballyhaunis Esker System, through Galway-Mayo-Roscommon.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The esker is formed within an area dominated by bedrock of Lower Carboniferous limestones. The esker itself is Quaternary in age, having been deposited either under or at the edge of the northeastward-retreating ice sheet during deglaciation, approximately 14,000 years ago.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The esker system is one of the finest examples of a long, wide tunnel-deposited esker in the country. The ridge also has many associated fan, delta, and sandur features associated with it. This esker system is the westernmost of the three major conduit systems that subglacially drained the melting ice sheet in the western portion of the Irish Midlands. The ridge 'wraps itself' around Slieve Dart at the northeast and is generally oriented in a northeast to southwest direction, and has many pits cut into it, both currently in use and disused.

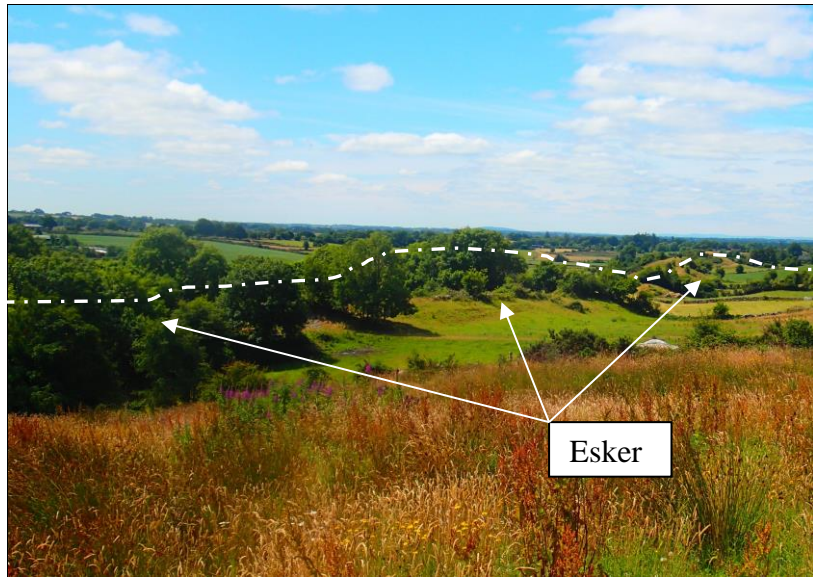
In interfingering with many flanking fans and deltas, the system has a pronounced kame-kettle topography in places. The esker is comprised chiefly of limestone clasts which have been derived from the bedrock around the site within the Irish Midlands. These were carried by ice, released into the meltwater conduit at the base of the ice, and rounded in a subglacial river before being left upstanding as the esker when the ice melted. Where present the esker ridge is a striking feature, standing proud of the flat landscape of till (boulder clay) and sands and gravels within which it was deposited.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; may be recommended for Geological NHA

The esker is one of Ireland's best examples of a tunnel-deposited esker and is an impressive, high, striking example of a dry sand and gravel ridge, standing proud of the surrounding landscape. This esker and the associated sands and gravels in the locality are an excellent and well-researched example of a deglacial, meltwater-deposited complex, with portions deposited under the ice, and portions at the ice margin.

Management/promotion issues

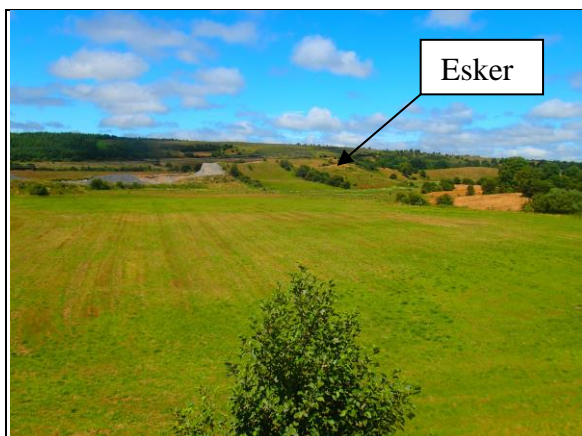
Signage along the roadside along the R327 roads, especially nearing the Slieve Dart ridge, might help in the promotion of the feature. A colour leaflet on 'The Eskers of County Galway' could also be produced. Currently, the land across the feature is in private ownership and the site should not be visited without the permission of the owners.



The Dunmore Esker, looking southeastwards from the lower slopes of Slieve Dart.
See the high, elevated, sinuous nature of the ridge.



Cross section through the esker in a gravel pit in Flaskagh More Townland.



The main esker ridge in Flaskagh Beg Townland.



The road rising up onto a hummocky portion of the feature in Shrule, north of Dunmore.

