

GALWAY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Streamstown Bay Marble Quarry
Other names used for site	Letternnoosh Marble Quarry
IGH THEME	IGH5 Precambrian, IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Letternnoosh
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Clifden
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	10
ITM CO-ORDINATES	464900E 752825N (centre of quarry)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET No. 37	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 10

Outline Site Description

Marble Quarry and workshops, still active using stockpiled material.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The Connemara Marble Formation is a distinctive unit of metamorphosed dolomite within the Dalradian succession of Connemara, with a complex history of alteration and segregation of mineral components that accounts for the range of green and other colours.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The marble is a true metamorphic marble with green, pale brown, grey and white magnesian marble varieties. It is metamorphosed dolomite rather than from an original pure limestone, and contains silicates that create a diversity and complexity of marble minerals. Some have also been altered by later metasomatism (alteration by hot fluids) and are classed as serpentine marbles.

The Streamstown Bay Marble Quarry yields some of the most attractive green marble, but also white and grey varieties, often banded and folded in appearance. Whilst it was operated in modern times using wire saws to produce large blocks which could be sawn and polished into panels for decorative cladding of internal walls, the quarry has for a long time only been used for its stockpiled material to produce small decorative and ornamental items and jewellery. So although the quarry has been in operation since around 1800-1810, the current output comprises small quantities of high value.

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

The marble quarry at Letternnoosh is a very long operating and well exposed site for Connemara green marble, and as one of the best examples it certainly deserves County Geological Site recognition, but may be considered as an NHA in comparison with other similar sites under either Precambrian (IGH5) or Economic Geology (IGH15) themes.

Management/promotion issues

The quarry is a working private business premises and there is no access without prior landowner permission. It is not suitable for general promotion as it stands, and could only be so with the operator's intention. The operator has always been welcoming for organised geological parties visiting by advance arrangement. A wide range of jewellery, trophy and decorative objects produced from Streamstown marble is sold in the owner's business in Moycullen, Co. Galway (Connemara Marble Industries Ltd).

Should the site ever change ownership in the future, maintaining access for geological groups would be desirable, as would the potential to create a tourist attraction out of the quarry itself.



A view into Streamstown Bay Marble Quarry. The faces have weathered but were green and attractively patterned when first sawn and fresh.



Left: A view into Streamstown Bay Marble Quarry, but note the walkways are no longer used or safe. Right: Modern production includes drilling cores of blocks for manufacture into coasters and other ornamental items.

