

KILKENNY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Earlsrath M9 Cutting
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH 10 Devonian
TOWNLAND(S)	Earlsrath
NEAREST TOWN	Mullinavat
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	Kilkenny 36
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	256410 126886 to 256382 126998
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	75 1/2 inch Sheet No. 19

Outline Site Description

Road cutting, 115 m long, along the M9 motorway, approximately midway between junction 10 and the Grannagh Roundabout near Waterford, as a short low cliff of rock. The cutting occurs on the side of a rest area on the western carriageway only (for northbound traffic).

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks are of Devonian age (approximately 390 million years). They are sandstones of the Carrigmaclea Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This short cutting displays the Carrigmaclea Formation. This comprises red and purple and brown/grey sandstones of Devonian age. They were formed in river (fluvial) environments rather than in the sea. They show features such as cross bedding (internal laminations in the sandstone) which are suggestive of the river environment, as well as larger scale but poorly developed channel forms in the beds.

Site Importance

The site is of County Geological Site importance. It is scientifically useful as a representative section of the Carrigmaclea Formation which is not well exposed across the southeast region. This formation is older than the Kiltorcan Formation, which is incorporated in two sites, but no other representative Devonian County Geological Sites exist in Kilkenny.

Management/promotion issues

The site is on a motorway but is fortunately accessible for visitors since there is a pull in lay-by isolating it for safe rest stops by drivers. Although the rock exposure is limited in extent it is accessible, and therefore this site is worth adding to the County Geological Site list. The GSI will liaise with the NRA, the County Council and appropriate authorities to discuss appropriate options for dissemination of information about the geological interest of the site.

Unfortunately the nature of the rock at this site means that the cuttings will generally weather, degrade and vegetate quicker than similar cuttings in Carboniferous limestone. It could be managed with very occasional clearing of loose rock and removal of scrub.



This cutting shows a modest rock section.



The rocks are safely accessible as there is a motorway rest area alongside.