

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Bennaunmore
Other names used for site	Lough Guitane, Cappagh Glen
IGH THEME	IGH11 Igneous Intrusions, IGH10 Devonian
TOWNLAND(S)	Cappagh, Crohane, Gortdromakiery, Shronaboy
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Killarney
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	75
ITM CO-ORDINATES	503360E 582850N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	79
GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	21
GIS CODE	KY022

Outline Site Description

A narrow river valley, bounded by mountainsides and summits up to 600 m in elevation.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Bedrock comprises Upper Devonian rhyolitic lavas, pyroclastic, and silicic volcanoclastic rocks, interstratified with sandstones of the Glenflesk Chloritic Sandstone Formation. The volcanic rocks in this region of Kerry are collectively known as the Lough Guitane Volcanic Complex, dated at 380 million years old.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The volcanic rocks in the Bennaunmore area are part of a centre of late Devonian rhyolite lavas and volcanoclastic rocks that extends for around 15 km eastwards from Horse's Glen, *via* Bennaunmore, to Killeen. Evidence at Bennaunmore indicates the lava flowed northeastwards from the volcanic vent. Volcanoclastic boulder tuffs up to 200 m thick near Bennaunmore consist of sandstone clasts (up to 4 m diameter) in a tuffaceous matrix. The volcanoclastic material consists of a mixture of volcanic and terrigenous (non-volcanic) sediments. At least one volcanic vent was active to the southwest of Bennaunmore where most of the volcanic activity occurred. Isotopic dating of subaerial tuff units in the Horses Glen Volcanic Centre, around 2 km west of Bennaunmore, indicate that the volcanoclastic rocks are c. 378 million years old. Some 5 km east, of Bennaunmore tuffs from the Killeen Volcanic Centre (Killeen County Geological Site), have been dated at c. 384 million years old.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This is an important County Geological Site. The Lough Guitane Volcanic Complex represents a rare episode of volcanic activity that occurred in southwest Ireland during Upper Devonian times.

Radiometric dating of minerals in the volcanoclastic rocks has indicated that the period of volcanic activity took place c. 380 million years ago.

Management/promotion issues

A track on the east side Lough Guitane leads southwards into mountainous terrain along the Cappagh River valley. Volcanic rocks can be observed on both sides of this route. The site is within Killarney National Park, Macgillycuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC and pNHA (site code 000365).



View north to Lough Guitane from Bennaunmore. Cappagh valley right. Eskduff Mountain on left.



Lough Guitane Rhyolite outcrops on north slopes of Bennaunmore.



Lough Guitane rhyolite (dark) and sandstone (light) in Cappagh valley.



View south to slopes of Bennaunmore from Cappagh valley.

