

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Camp Valley
Other names used for site	Camp, Tonakilly Section
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Tonakilly
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Camp
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	36
ITM CO-ORDINATES	468625E 610883N (headland in central portion of section)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	71
GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	20
GIS CODE	KY027

Outline Site Description

This site comprises a 5 m high coastal section approximately 800 metres long, approximately 1 km northwest of the village of Camp.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The cliff section along the Tonakilly portion of the beach on the southern side of Tralee Bay is comprised of Quaternary age glacial sediments, deposited during the last Ice Age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The section at Tonakilly exposes long-studied sediments that have made this an important site for glacial stratigraphic work in Munster and Ireland.

Quaternary deposits form the soft and rapidly-eroding cliffs at the site. Studies completed in the late 1970s reported the presence of two distinct tills in these cliff sections and they are still visible today as soft-sediment units of markedly different colours.

The reported sequence comprises a lower diamicton, which is interpreted as a till, containing black cherty mudstone, sandstone sand silicified limestone clasts. Erratics of Inch Conglomerate are also present. This is overlain by an upper diamicton, also interpreted as till, characterised by red sandstone clasts.

The lower till is interpreted as having been deposited by ice moving from the north, as it contains clasts characteristic of the Carboniferous Shannon group. The upper, younger till is considered to have been deposited by ice moving from the south and southeast, as it contains locally-derived sandstone and conglomerate clasts (most likely from Derrymore Glen) as well as silicified limestone clasts from the rocks of the Killarney area.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This was historically one of the most important glacial lithostratigraphic sites in the country and though the section is poorly exposed today it merits recognition as a County Geological Site owing to its historical significance.

Management/promotion issues

The site is located at a public beach and is readily accessible, but caution is required as some of the exposure is inaccessible at high tide, and with the tide encroaching rapidly one can get stranded. Care should also be taken close to the cliffs as there may be occasional falls of rock or debris. The site merits promotion, preferably as part of a north Kerry coastal geoheritage trail, and is partially within the Tralee Bay and Maharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC and pNHA (site code 002070).



The section along the western end of the beach at Camp (Tonakilly Townland), viewed from the northeast. Note the rock armouring of the soft cliffs, obscuring much of the exposure.



Two units of diamicton (interpreted as tills) at Tonakilly.



The eastern portion of the Tonakilly Section, where exposure is less slumped.



Detail of the two diamicton units at the eastern end of the Tonakilly exposure. Staff is 3 m high.



Detail of clast-dominated diamicton with sandstone and silicified limestone, at the eastern end of the cliff.

