

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Cloghvorragh
Other names used for site	Cloghvorra, <i>An Cloch Mhór</i>
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Gortalinny North
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Kenmare
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	93
ITM CO-ORDINATES	493765E 57078N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	78
GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	20
GIS CODE	KY036

Outline Site Description

Large limestone erratic resting on sandstone hill on open hilly terrain, c. 3 km east of Kenmare.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The erratic is composed of Carboniferous limestone, possibly from the Victoria Point Member of the Ballysteen Formation. The boulder rests on a hill where the bedrock comprises sandstone of the Upper Devonian Caha Mountain Formation. The boulder was deposited during deglaciation at the end of the last Ice Age during the Quaternary Period, probably around 15,000 years ago.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Cloghvorragh Stone is a classic glacial erratic: a large boulder perched on bedrock of different composition and age, implying its origin lies elsewhere, and that some great natural force or process led to its relocation. The local bedrock is entirely Old Red Sandstone, as is all the terrain to the south of the Roughty River from Kenmare to Kilgarvan. The weathered boulder is well-bedded, comprising blue-grey limestone beds interbedded with darker nodular calcareous cherts. Carboniferous Limestone rocks occur in the lowland floor of the Roughty River valley, extending westwards along the north side of the Kenmare River (south of the N70 road) as far as the Greenane Islands. Among these are limestones of the Ballysteen Formation. Well-bedded nodular calcareous cherts interbedded with calcarenites and calcilutites are found towards the top of this formation (Victoria Point Member). It is thus likely that the boulder was derived from a local source of limestone in the area occupied by the Kenmare River and the Roughty River valley. During Last Glacial Maximum, 26,000 to 21,000 years ago, the Kerry-Cork Ice Cap was centred over the inner Kenmare River (Greenane Islands). Limestone bedrock at the base of the ice sheet was plucked up, subsumed into, and transported by the moving ice sheet. When the ice melted, boulders and sediments within the ice sheet were deposited on the land surface. The Placenames Database of Ireland (logainm.ie) notes a reference to the stone (*na Cloichi Barraighi*) dating from the mid-16th century. A black and white plate (c. 1890), available in the public domain (*via* National Library of Ireland), shows the stone has changed little since the photograph was captured. An illustration by George Victor Du Noyer similarly demonstrates the durability of geological features when left unhindered in a natural setting.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

An important County Geological Site because of the siting of a large, solitary, limestone boulder on sandstone bedrock. In addition to the stone being a natural feature of interest visited by locals and others since the 18th century, the glacial erratic is important in helping to understand events of the last Ice Age.

Management/promotion issues

Situated a short walk from a public road., the feature is on privately owned land. The site is of interest for geological research and would be suitable for public promotion as a geological heritage feature of interest in south Kerry. The upper part of the stone hosts a varied habitat of vegetation including ivy, holly, ash, whitethorn, fern and heath grass.



East side of Cloghvorragh. View westwards towards The Sound in the Kenmare River.



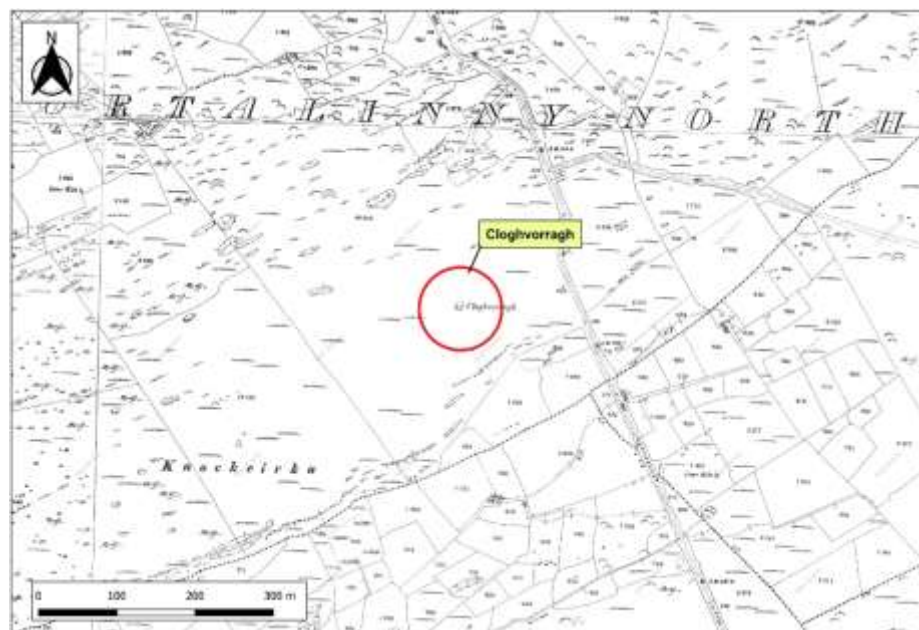
Bands of chert nodules on Cloghvorragh.



East side of Cloghvorragh.



West side of Cloghvorragh. View eastwards.





George Victor Du Noyer illustration (Cloghvorra Kenmare; No 7, *Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*)