

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Maharees
Other names used for site	Magharees, Magherees Peninsula, <i>An Machaire</i> , <i>Na Machairí</i> also West Cutteen, Fahamore, West Scraggane, Kilshannig, Ballycurrane to Kilshannig Point are all separate parts of site
IGH THEME	IGH8 Lower Carboniferous
TOWNLAND(S)	Garrywilliam, Cutteen, Fahamore, Kilshannig
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Castlegregory
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	19, 19.1, 26, 27
ITM CO-ORDINATES	461700E 618900N (centre of Scraggane Bay)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	71
GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	20
GIS CODE	KY066

Outline Site Description

This site includes a number of discrete headlands and bays at the northern end of the long tombolo peninsula, north of Castlegregory.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks exposed in this area are various types of limestone of the Lower Carboniferous (Mississippian, 359–323 million years old) Cloonagh and Dirtoge Limestone Formations (specifically, 346–330 million years old). The Lower Carboniferous succession is over 350 m thick here.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

At Garrywilliam and along the western end of Scraggane Bay, southeast dipping micritic limestone containing white spar (calcite) filled cavities is exposed. The rocks here are highly fossiliferous, with corals and crinoids abundant. Cherts and micrites, displaying minor folding, are seen further south near the end of the sandy beach on the western side of the tombolo. Along the northern shoreline, bioclastic and argillaceous limestones with ripple surfaces crop out at Fahamore. On the eastern side of Scraggane Bay, thin interbeds of muddy lenticular/nodular limestone and chert are visible. These rocks are succeeded further east, near Kilshannig Point, by fossil-rich, massive micritic limestone, as well as some dolomites, limestone conglomerate beds and shales.

Recent micropalaeontological data suggests that the mudmound limestones at the base of the succession may be late Tournasian to early Viséan age (358–340 million years old), and thus belong to the Waulsortian. Further research is needed to confirm this age assignment.

Quaternary deposits overlie the limestone bedrock in low cliffs around the northern coastline but are not important stratigraphically or sedimentologically.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

As the limestone bedrock exposed at this site represent the youngest sedimentary bedrock of the Dingle Peninsula, the inclusion of the locality as a County Geological Site is important. There are especially good exposures of mudmound limestones also.

Management/promotion issues

Much of the site is located on public beaches 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 cliffs as there may be occasional falls of rock or debris. Significant parts of the site are in the Tralee Bay and Maharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC and pNHA (site code 002070) or the Tralee Bay Complex SPA (site code 004168) and the geodiversity of the bedrock and its associated features at the head of the Maharees tombolo could be highlighted in future on literature produced.



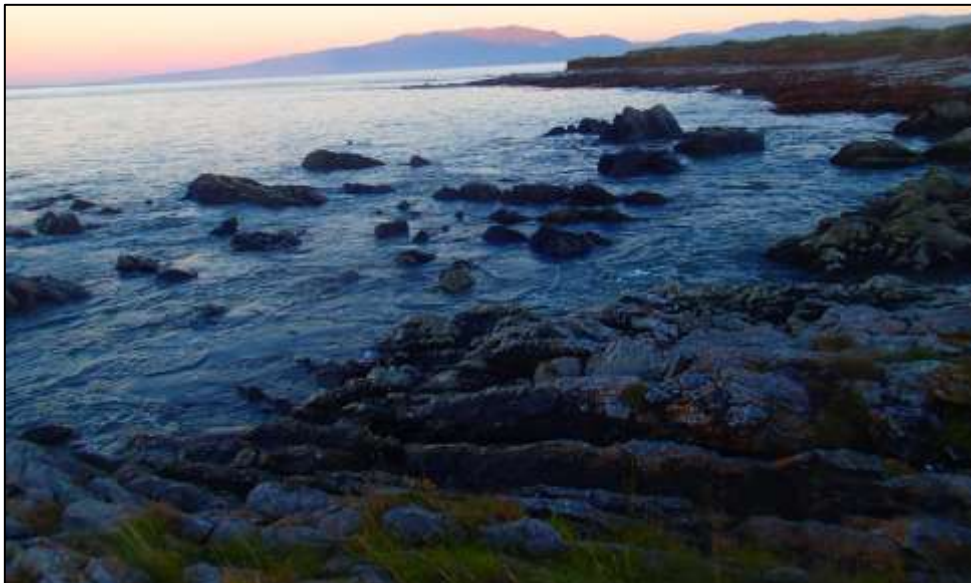
View of the rocks backing the beach at 'Wide Bay', Garrywilliam, from the south.



Thickly bedded, grey bioclastic limestones of Dirtoge Limestone Formation, at 'Wide Bay'.



Crinoid stem ossicles and corals in the Dirtoge Limestone Formation at Garrywilliam.



Rock platform of alternating limestone conglomerate, limestone and shale beds at Kilshannig Point

