

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Muckcross Mine
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH6 Mineralogy, IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Muckcross
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Killarney
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	74
ITM CO-ORDINATES	494810E 586000N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	78
GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	21
GIS CODE	KY067

Outline Site Description

A small, abandoned mine site next to a lakeshore, on a wooded peninsula.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The bedrock underlying the mine site comprises sandstone of the Lower Carboniferous (Mississippian, 359–323 million years old) Camillan Sandstone Formation and bioclastic limestone of the overlying Ballymartin Formation. Mineralization observed in waste rock on site is hosted by limestone.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The mine site on the Muckcross Peninsula, which separates Lough Leane and Muckcross Lake at Killarney, lies between Victoria Point and Camillan Bay in Muckcross Lake. It contains the remains of four shafts/stopes, the ruins of an unidentified building and an area with mine waste that may have served as a processing floor. Two other “Copper Mines” are marked on the old six-inch map in the wooded area west of Camillan Bay but no traces of these were found during this audit.

The mineralization occurs in the Carboniferous limestone and was described in the 19th century as occurring either in a bed conformable with the limestone or as a lode (vein). Mining is reported to have taken place over a number of years in the mid-18th century, but resumed from 1785 to 1818. The mine was developed as a copper mine but in 1794 cobalt ore was discovered and apparently discarded as “rubbish”, although one individual recognized its worth and “took away 20 tons”. The primary mineralization mainly comprises chalcopyrite, tennantite, pyrite, arsenopyrite, galena and sphalerite. Two cobalt-bearing arsenides (alloyite and skutterudite) have also been reported, along with some native silver. The mineralized mine waste has undergone oxidation and numerous secondary minerals have been reported as encrustations and coatings, including the pink cobalt arsenate erythrite.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This is an historically significant mine site where uncommon cobalt mineralization has been described.

Management/promotion issues

The Muckcross Peninsula is part of Killarney National Park and is a very popular amenity area, traversed by trails that are readily accessible on foot or by bicycle from Muckcross House. The mine site is situated immediately beside the main lakeside walking path. Numbered signage beside the path refer to a previous walking trail but no map is available for this. A geological trail, based on a downloadable map and site descriptions, and including the Muckcross Section sites (see Muckcross Section CGS report) would be a worthwhile addition. The site is entirely within the Killarney National Park, Macgillycuddy’s Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC/pNHA (site code 000365), and the Killarney National Park SPA (site code 004038).



South side of old mine site east of Camillan Bay, view eastwards over what appears to be the old processing area, which contains abundant clasts of mineralized rock. Fenced shaft at southeastern end of mine site visible in background.



Old mine site east of Camillan Bay: shallow, apparently infilled shaft. This shaft is located on the north eastern side of the mine site, immediately south of the walking path.



Old mine site east of Camillan Bay: shallow shaft on northwestern side of mine site, immediately south of the walking path.



Old mine site east of Camillan Bay: fenced shaft or stope at southeastern end of mine site.



Old mine site east of Camillan Bay: ruined, presumably mine building, of unknown purpose, at western end of site. View of interior from east.

