

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Oyster Hill
Other names used for site	Oyster Hall, Sammy's Rock
IGH THEME	IGH8 Lower Carboniferous, IGH3 Carboniferous to Pliocene Palaeontology
TOWNLAND(S)	Ballymakegoge
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Fenit
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	28
ITM CO-ORDINATES	476025E 615150N (small quarry at southeast side of hill)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	71
GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	20
GIS CODE	KY069

Outline Site Description

This site includes a small quarry and flanking bedrock outcrops, on a low limestone knoll, 3 km east of Fenit.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks exposed in the Oyster Hill locality are limestones of the Lower Carboniferous (Mississippian, 359–323 million years old) Cloonagh and Dirtoge Limestone Formations (specifically 346–330 million years old).

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Oyster Hill is a relatively prominent limestone knoll, which comprises an Asbian mudmound. The shape of the hill is likely to reflect either faulting along the northern hill margin or the presence of an original reef scarp there.

The primary interest in the Oyster Hill site is the presence of striped limestones in a small, roadside quarry and on Black Rock just offshore to the south of it. Also of interest is the abundance of brachiopod, goniatite and conodont fossils in outcrops on the summit and shoulder of the hill.

Oyster Hill is also the most important and informative location in Kerry for studying the nature of Asbian mudmound facies (specifically the Cloonagh Limestone Formation), as well as the overlying sequence of dark bedded limestones (generally calcilutite grade), shales and bioclastic breccias (Dirtoge Limestone Formation, also called the Oyster Hall Breccia Formation). Both units display striped limestone, perhaps implying several phases of formation.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This County Geological Site is an important representative site exhibiting accessible, fresh exposures of striped limestones in an Asbian mudmound, as well as easily observable fossils.

Management/promotion issues

The site is on private farmland and entry is possible only with landowner permission, in particular the quarry, which is openly accessible from the roadside. The floor of the quarry is very uneven and if permission has been granted, care must be taken here. Much of the site, and including the quarry, is within the Tralee Bay and Magharees Peninsula, West to Cloghane SAC and pNHA (site code 002070), while Black Rock is in the Tralee Bay Complex SPA (site code 004188). Given how rare striped limestones are in Ireland, the site merits promotion, preferably as part of a north Kerry coastal geological heritage trail.



Oyster Hill, viewed from the beach at Kilfenora to the northwest. See the small quarry in the hill at the extreme right of the photograph.



View of quarry face at Oyster Hill, with Sammy's Rock the high crag at the top left.



Conodont fossils in massive micrite of the Cloonagh Limestone Formation at Oyster Hill.



Sub-horizontal parallel ribs of coarse calcite in the Cloonagh Limestone Formation at Oyster Hill. Striped limestones are well expressed just left of the 2 m high staff.

