

LOUTH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Dunany Point
Other names used for site	Dunany Ridge, also Site of the Mad Chair of Dunany
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Dunany
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Castlebellingham
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	16, 19
ITM CO-ORDINATES	715915E 791400N (centre of section)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	36 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 13

Outline Site Description

This site includes a coastal cliff section that extends for several hundred metres and is c. 8m-10m high over most of its extent.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The cliff section at Dunany Point is comprised of Quaternary Age glacial sediments, deposited during deglaciation at the end of the last Ice Age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The coastal section at Dunany Point is cut into a marked, west-east-trending ridge which is up to 25m high.

The cliff section exposes sediments important to an understanding of relative sea levels in this part of Ireland during the end of the last Ice Age. The sediments in the ridge consist mainly of muddy sediments that contrast starkly with the stratified deposits exposed along the north side of Dundalk Bay, at Rathcor and Cooley Point.

The Dunany Ridge is one of the highest and most continuous moraines in Ireland that has been interpreted to have been deposited in glaciomarine conditions (*i.e.* by a glacier into the sea). It is also the southernmost section showing definitively glaciomarine sediments along the east coast of Ireland, and was therefore at the southernmost extent of glaciomarine conditions in the Irish Sea Basin during the last deglaciation.

Dunany Point (*Dunany* being the anglicisation of *Dún Áine* -the fort of Áine) is said to be the place where the beautiful mythical Queen Áine sat in her chair of stone and looked across the sea, towards her love who never returned. Local folklore says that the black rocks at the base of the cliff were Áine's attempt to build a causeway, so she could see her love one day. They are in fact glacial erratics, which have fallen from the cliff as it has been eroded inland over the millennia.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The section at Dunany Point is important for the information its stratigraphy provides about the regional deglaciation in the Irish Sea Basin, and the section shows excellent examples of unsorted, heterogeneous glaciomarine sediment.

Management/promotion issues

The site is accessible via the public beach and is therefore easily visited. The cliffs are prone to slumping, however, and care must be taken when close to the faces.



View northwards along the beach cliff sections at Dunany Point.



View northwards from Port, along the Dunany Point section, where the marked east-west ridge is also seen.



