

## LIMERICK - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Galtee Mountains</b>
Other names used for site	<i>Sliabh na nGaibhlte</i>
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH7 Quaternary</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Ballygeana, Baunteen, Barna, Ballynamuddagh, Carrigeen Mountan, Knocknagalty</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Anglesborough</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>50, 58</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>587790E 623835N (Galtymore peak)</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 74</b>	<b>GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 22</b>
<b>GIS CODE LK015</b>	

### **Outline Site Description**

The Galtee Mountains site is a high mountain range in southeast County Limerick and southwest County Tipperary.

### **Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**

The mountains comprise ice-scoured bedrock, which is mostly Devonian Old Red Sandstone, but with some shale and greywacke of Silurian age. The mountains have been shaped and moulded during the Quaternary (Ice Age) by glacier ice abrading the mountain tops and flanks.

### **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

The Galtees are Ireland's highest inland mountains, and the summit of the range is blanketed by a few metres of blanket peat, which has formed across the summit since the Ice Age. This peat has been cut over and eroded in places and displays high peat hags in some localities, particularly on the southern shoulder of Galtymore. The Devonian sandstone and conglomerate bedrock is well exposed at numerous localities. It is known that the sandstone bedrock at the top of Galtymore and across the highest Galtee Mountains ridge poked through the glacier ice during the last ice age, a feature known as a nunatak.

A number of deep corries occur across the top of the ridge, comprising deep, wide hollows which are sometimes over a kilometre wide. These include discrete as well as composite corrie features. Those in Limerick show excellent examples of lateral and corrie-edge recessional moraines. The moraines are often strewn with very large erratic boulders that dropped from the ice. In some cases these weigh several hundred tonnes.

The corrie features have almost-vertical back walls, with the highest over 300m in height. Beautiful waterfalls cascade down these backwalls in places. Carrignabinnia and Galtymore are flanked by fine arête ridges, which are very jagged, sometimes knife-edged, craggy rock walls that separate two corrie features.

### **Site Importance – County Geological Site, recommended for Geological NHA**

Ireland's highest inland mountains provide an excellent corrie landscape within a relatively restricted (20 square kilometres in Limerick) extent. The range is already a pNHA and SAC (Site 000646) for biodiversity reasons and the landscape of mountain glaciation is also of national importance.

### **Management/promotion issues**

Access to the mountains is restricted to hillwalkers and climbers, as there is no road access. Some signboards explaining the glacial history and importance of the mountains would prove worthwhile, potentially at the trailhead to the Paradise Loop walk near Anglesborough, or some of the other trailheads to the mountains.



The portion of the Galtee Mountains in County Limerick, viewed from near Ballylanders.



Assaroula Glen and Lyraveg Glen, on the northwestern flank of Lyracappul / Carrignabinnia.

