LEITRIM - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE Other names used for site IGH THEME TOWNLAND(S) NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE SIX INCH MAP NUMBER ITM CO-ORDINATES 1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 26 GIS CODE LM008 Creevelea

IGH15 Economic Geology, IGH6 Mineralogy Gowlaun, Knockacullion Drumkeeran 15 590825E 829275N GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 7

Outline Site Description

Creevelea was a significant historical iron works. Although many of the buildings no longer stand, a large blast furnace remains as the focal point.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks in the immediate vicinity of the iron works site are part of the Dergvone Shale Formation. These are part of the Carboniferous succession of shales and sandstones, collectively termed the Leitrim Group, which comprise the Namurian-aged (middle Carboniferous) rocks that form the upland plateaux of the Arigna area west of Lough Allen; Slieve Anierin, the Lackagh Hills and Thur Mountain.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The local rocks in the immediate vicinity of the iron works site are part of the Dergvone Shale Formation. These shales include siderite (iron carbonate mineral) nodules which can be up to 60cm in diameter. The rocks are hard, but become loose from their host shales very easily, and can be found in streambeds. They were scavenged as iron ores from historical times, with iron working in the district dating back to the 16th century at least. Smelting was achieved using charcoal made from local forests, but these were exhausted by around 1770.

The discovery of coal in the district provided a new fuel source and iron working at Creevelea began in around 1853, and lasted a few years. The final page of this report features a photograph of the site in 1905, but it is not clear when iron working actually ceased. It is apparent from today's structures that the site has been considerably modified since, with stone and brick buildings demolished, and reportedly taken for road-making. The channel below the furnace is now filled in, but sluice and weir type structures survive in the river channel. The remnant walls of the engine house are also beside the furnace, but most other structures have gone.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

As an iconic piece of industrial heritage tied into the landscape and the geological resources that fuelled the iron smelting industry in the district, Creevelea deserves to be recognised as a County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

The blast furnace is still substantially intact but the growth of trees and vegetation on top and within mortar will inevitably deteriorate the structure. Conservation building works to stabilise it are needed. Whilst the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland had such works on a priority project list, sadly the organisation no longer exists (since August 2019), and it would need either a national group like the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland (IHAI), or more likely a committed local group, to undertake such a project. The site is private land and visiting is not possible without permission.



The blast furnace at Creevelea.



The remaining part of the engine house.



An iron carbonate nodule in the river bank.



A large iron carbonate nodule in the river bed.



The view into the site from the roadway.



