

MEATH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Murrens
Other names used for site	Finnea-Murrens (Westmeath-Meath), Castletown Esker
IGH THEME:	IGH 7 (Quaternary)
TOWNLAND(S)	Murrens, numerous
NEAREST TOWN	Oldcastle
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	14, 15
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	252500 274800 = N 52 74
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	34, 41, 42
	1/2 inch Sheet No. 13

Outline Site Description

Wooded ridge – esker and hummocky ground including gravel pit.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Quaternary glacial deposits (esker, ice contact fan and delta system).

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This is a long beaded esker system which feeds into a large, supraglacial delta complex, with flanking fans and kames. It extends into Westmeath (Finnea-Murrens Esker) over a distance of 15 km and comprising 11 segments in total. Murrens, which is situated 4km south of Oldcastle along the R195, is composed of a number of glacial depositional features. These include: an esker, formed by the deposition of sand and gravel by a subglacial river; and an ice contact fan and delta system, which is formed by the deposition of sand and gravel carried by glaciofluvial meltwater from a nearby ice sheet, creating hummocky terrain. A large sand and gravel quarry, called Murrens Quarry (owned by J.J. Flood and Sons) lies within this site.

Site Importance

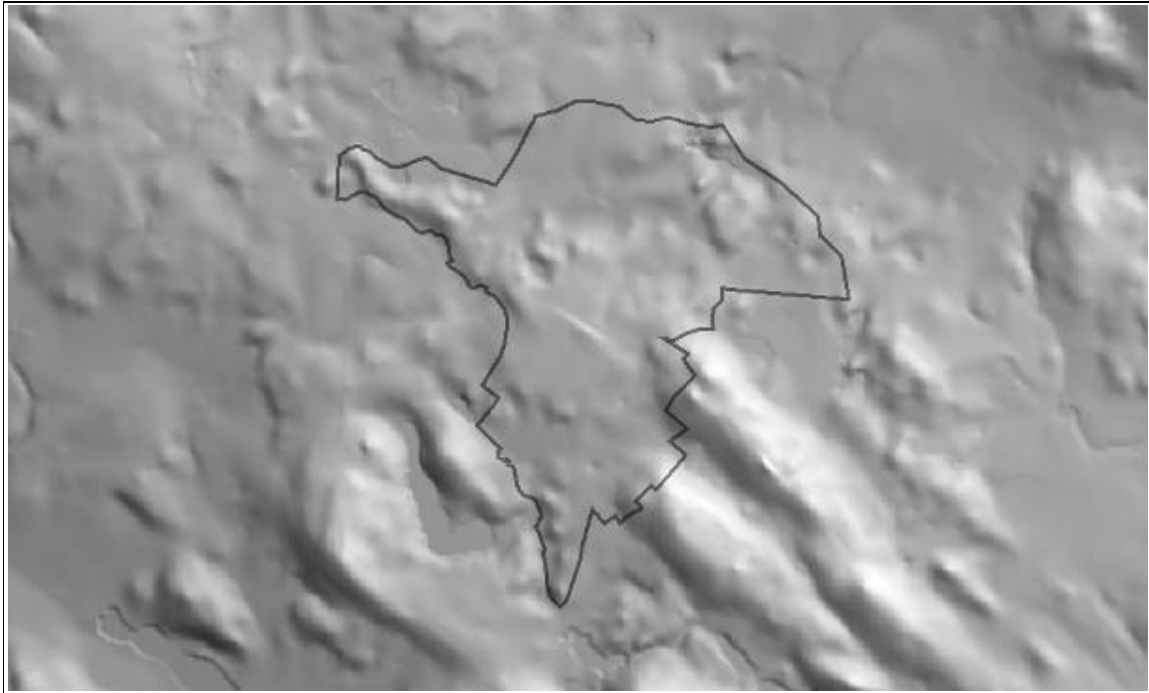
This site is of very good quality, showing spectacular topography. Unique in Ireland and of international importance, the esker will be recommended for NHA designation.

Management/promotion issues

No further quarrying should be permitted on this esker system. Illegal dumping has been noted on several occasions in old pits. It also has excellent educational potential, with a roadside cutting into the esker.



Above: A view from the north looking towards the esker at Murrens, seen here as a wooded ridge in the background.



Above: Digital elevation model (DEM) of Murrens clearly showing the esker as a ridge to the north west of the site. The low relief area directly to the south east of this ridge represents deposits of sand and gravel in a glacial outwash plain.
Below: Hummocky sands and gravels flanking the main esker ridge within the fan-shaped area (R.Meehan, 2007).

Murrens

