

MEATH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Carrickleck Quarry
Other names used for site	Roadstone – Silica Sand Ltd.
IGH THEME:	IGH 9 (Upper Carboniferous)
TOWNLAND(S)	Carrickleck
NEAREST TOWN	Nobber
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	2, 3
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	282200 292300 = N 822 923
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	35 1/2 inch Sheet No. 13

Outline Site Description

A working quarry.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Upper Carboniferous (Namurian) disaggregated sandstone of the Carrickleck Sandstone Member.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Formally owned by Irish Glass Bottle this small working quarry now owned by Roadstone has excavated through a narrow strip of sandstone forming a long, narrow valley. The walls of this quarry reach up to 30m in some places. This exposed sandstone is locally disaggregated, meaning that its individual grains are no longer cemented together strongly. This produces an unusual situation where the sandstone, which appears to be solid rock as it still holds its structure (bedding, joints, etc), can be easily crushed by hand to produce a fine dusty sand. Due to this natural breakdown, it is possible to extract and sell this fine grained sand without having to crush or break the rock.

Site Importance

This quarry has an important historic significance as it is possible that rock quarried from this site was used in the production of the High Crosses at Kells. This is also a very interesting example of disaggregated sandstone and is probably the only one of its kind within Meath and is recommended for County Geological Site status.

Management/promotion issues

Due to the unusual characteristics of the sandstone this would make a good teaching locality. This site is adjacent to a quiet third class road and access is via a locked gate. Although small and relatively quiet this quarry is a potentially hazardous environment and would not be suitable for general promotion without appropriate access arrangements being made with Roadstone.



Left: Quarry operations have carved out this narrow valley exposing the rocks of the Carrickleck Sandstone Member.
Right: Disaggregated sandstone – bedding and other sedimentary structures are still visible but this weakened rock breaks down into a fine grained sand, even when squeezed between the hands.

Carricleck Quarry

