

MONAGHAN - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Hope Mine
Other names used for site	Cornalough
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Cornalough
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Castleblaney
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	25
ITM CO-ORDINATES	682994E 816202N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	28
	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 8/9

Outline Site Description

The site is located at the edge of a small copse of trees in an area of flat ground surrounded by drumlins. The land is almost exclusively given over to pasture.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The area is underlain by fine-to-coarse-grained turbidites of the Silurian Shercock Formation, part of the Longford-Down Inlier.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Hope Mine was one of a number of lead and silver mines in Monaghan exploited in the mid-19th century. It was probably in operation between 1852 and 1869, and possibly up to 1874. Total output was estimated to be 314 tonnes of ore, including 235 tonnes of lead and 16,017g (565 oz) of silver. The ore consisted of argentiferous galena (PbS) and sphalerite in barite (BaSO₄). The lode developed at Hope Mine had a north-south strike and was apparently between 2 and 30m in depth.

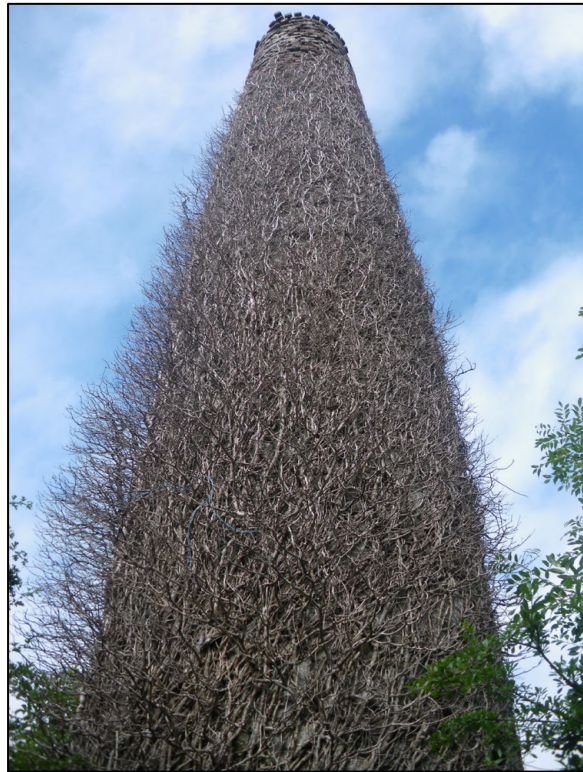
The site is today partly grassed over and partly under trees and shrubs. The site is part of a working farm and the land is used for cattle grazing. The distinguishing feature of the site is the extant engine-house chimney, the only example of a mine chimney in County Monaghan. The lower part of this Cornish-style chimney is made of local stone but the upper part is of red brick, making it typical of the Cornish-style engine-house chimneys erected on Irish mine sites. Though intact, the chimney is heavily covered by ivy and some bricks have fallen from its flanged rim. The ivy has recently been cut around the base in an attempt to kill it but the chimney remains covered by thick woody stems (August 2013). The chimney is surrounded at its base by coarse mine waste and a second waste heap is found in the trees to the northeast. The latter heap is apparently just north of the main engine shaft but this area is now completely overgrown and no definite trace of the shaft can be observed. A flat grassed area west of the chimney, recently used for growing hay, has the appearance and dimensions of a dressing floor.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The main feature of importance on the site is the Cornish engine-house chimney, the only example of its kind in County Monaghan. Other features typical of mine sites are absent or poorly preserved. The site should be considered as a County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

The site is on private land used for pasture. The chimney is under significant threat as a consequence of infestation by ivy over many years. There have been recent attempts to control this by cutting the roots around the base of the chimney and the ivy is dying. However, the chimney remains covered by wooden stems and the brickwork is largely invisible below the top few metres. Where visible, loose bricks are apparent, notably around the flanged rim at the top from which several bricks have fallen. There are significant gaps in the lower stonework as well where absent mortar has allowed blocks to fall out. Caution is needed in respect of any potential future collapse of the engine-house shaft, the site of which is obscured.



Cornish engine-house chimney at Hope Mine covered by dead ivy stems.



Top of chimney showing loose brickwork (left) and base showing mortar damage and loss of blocks (right).



Probable site of former mine dressing floor, immediately west of chimney, now used as hay field (left).

