

## MAYO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	Castlebar-Westport (Drumlins)
Other names used for site	
<b>IGH THEME</b>	IGH7 Quaternary
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	Numerous townlands
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	Castlebar
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	67, 68, 69, 76, 77, 78, 87, 88, 89
<b>ITM COORDINATES</b>	499970E to 514970N 785010N to 790015N
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NO. 31</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 11</b>
<b>GIS Code MO028</b>	

### Outline Site Description

A low-lying landscape of undulating drumlins between Castlebar and Westport, to the north and south of the N5 road and railway line.

### Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The drumlins are formed on a variety of bedrock types and ages that include Dalradian metamorphic rocks, Devonian Old Red Sandstone and Lower Carboniferous limestone and sandstone. The drumlins are Quaternary in age and form part of the Clew Bay drumlin field.

### Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The landscape between Castlebar and Westport is relatively low-lying, and slopes gently towards Clew Bay, and is characterised by a drumlin landscape. Some of the drumlins are superimposed on older glacial bedforms. The drumlins are generally <1 km long and 250 m wide. The trend of the drumlins is curved, with an overall NNW-SSE to N-S orientation. Drumlin elevations in the area generally range from 50-70 m above sea-level.

The glacial till is derived mainly from Devonian and Lower Carboniferous sandstone. The drumlins were deposited at the base of an ice sheet during the last Ice Age. A series of lakes (e.g. Islandeady Lough and Lannagh Lough) occupy the interdrumlin areas on the north side of the N5 Castlebar-Westport road. The GSI Memoir to Sheet 75 (1872) describes these lakes as the 'Drumneen Loughs'. Subsoil thicknesses amid these interdrumlin areas are less than the thickness of the drumlins.

Local townland names reflect the significance of the drumlins in the cultural landscape, with the common occurrence of *Drom* (Irish word for *ridge*) and *Cloon* (Irish word for *dry place*). Examples include *Drumshinnagh*, *Drumneen*, *Drummadoon*, *Drumminabo*, *Drumminwonagh*, *Cloonan*, *Cloonkeen* and *Cloonganavan*.

### Site Importance – County Geological Site

This is an important site in terms of large-scale Quaternary subglacial geomorphology and it complements the abundant and excellent variety of glacial geomorphology landforms in County Mayo. The overall area occupied by the drumlins is too extensive to be defined as a single site with a specific boundary, as would be required for NHA status. Any good examples of individual drumlins should be protected.

### Management/promotion issues

The drumlin features are of interest as their abundance is evident to anyone driving through the landscape between Castlebar and Westport. Most roads skirt around the base of these low hills. Recent road developments on the R311 Castlebar-Newport cut through the drumlin at Drumshinnagh, 3.5km west of Castlebar. The overall site features should be promoted as unique amongst landscape elements within the County Development Plan and in Landscape Characterisation.



Drumlin north of R311 Castlebar to Newport road. Nephin mountains visible to the north.



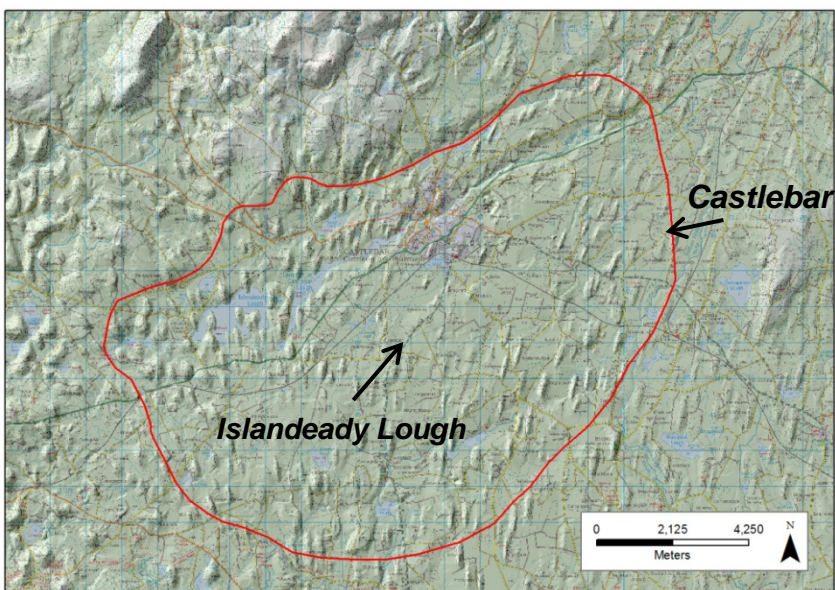
R311 road cutting through drumlin at Drumshinnagh (3.5km west of Castlebar), looking eastwards towards Castlebar.



Looking east towards a N-S trending drumlin (Islandeady) in Islandeady Lough. The drumlin is almost entirely surrounded by lake water, with access to the island and graveyard (visible on south side of drumlin) via an isthmus at the drumlin's southern end.



Two drumlins in Mountgregory (2km NE of Castlebar) viewed looking southward from Cappagh.



Airphoto of drumlin landscape near Islandeady Lough (see arrow on map above).  
Castlebar - Westport road and railway visible at bottom.