

MAYO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Dunmore- Ballyhaunis Esker System
Other names used for site	Dunmore esker, Ballyhaunis esker, Richmond esker, Tuam esker, Barnaderg esker, Moylough esker, Kilkerrin esker, Boyounagh esker, Slieve Dart esker, Garranlahan esker, Ballinlough esker
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Numerous: Cashel, Clydagh Upper, Clydagh Lower, Coolatinny, Carrick, Cloonkeehan West, Cloonlee, Meelick, Coosaun, Ballybane Lower, Ballybane, Milltown, Cloonfinneen, Coolcam, Glenmore, Clogher Lower, Rathleena, Stonepark South, Moanvane, Stonepark North, Glenties, Garranlahan More, Grange, Pollinea Upper, Pollinea Lower, Lisnagroob, Kiltullagh
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Ballyhaunis
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	93, 103
ITM CO-ORDINATES	554710E 778770N (centre of features)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NOS.	32,33,39,40,46,47
GIS Code MO052	GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 11

Outline Site Description

This esker is so large that it must be considered on a regional scale so as to appreciate its overall geometry. Sections of the esker system have been extensively quarried in the past.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The eskers are Quaternary in age, having been deposited at the base of the ice sheet moving northwest to southeast during early deglaciation at the end of the last Ice Age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This esker drained the majority of the western ice dome that covered the country during the last Ice Age. The site is part of a system of eskers located in counties Mayo, Roscommon and Galway, roughly between Moylough (Co. Galway) and Ballyhaunis (Co. Mayo). The eskers comprise single crested and multi-crested esker portions. Many esker beads are flanked by hummocky glaciofluvial outwash gravels and sands, deposited as kames, fans, deltas and sandur systems. One hundred and sixty two individual segments have been identified in the Dunmore-Ballyhaunis Esker System. This system in reality comprises many individual esker systems, but as detailed mapping has not been done on the individual features it is considered as one system. This large esker complex is the westernmost of the two great subglacial drainage relicts of the last Irish ice sheet.

Site Importance – County Geological site; recommended for Geological NHA

Currently not within any designated SAC or NHA, this site is of national importance in terms of understanding the configuration of the last Irish ice sheet, and is recommended for geological NHA designation. The eskers are Ireland's best examples of tunnel-deposited eskers. The Ballinlough-Curragh West portion of the system is the priority area for preservation.

Management/promotion issues

This extensive landscape feature is a superb example of glacial landforms that are characteristic of this area of SE Mayo and the adjacent regions of County Galway and Roscommon. Quarrying has been occurring extensively along sections of the eskers. The regions outlined in red on the maps below are indicative of the areas wherein the individual esker features of the Dunmore-Ballyhaunis System are found in Co. Mayo. The individual eskers are recommended for geological NHA designation.



Castlebar railway line cutting through an esker at Coolnafarna, east of Ballyhaunis.



Farm road on the crest of an esker at Lurgan.



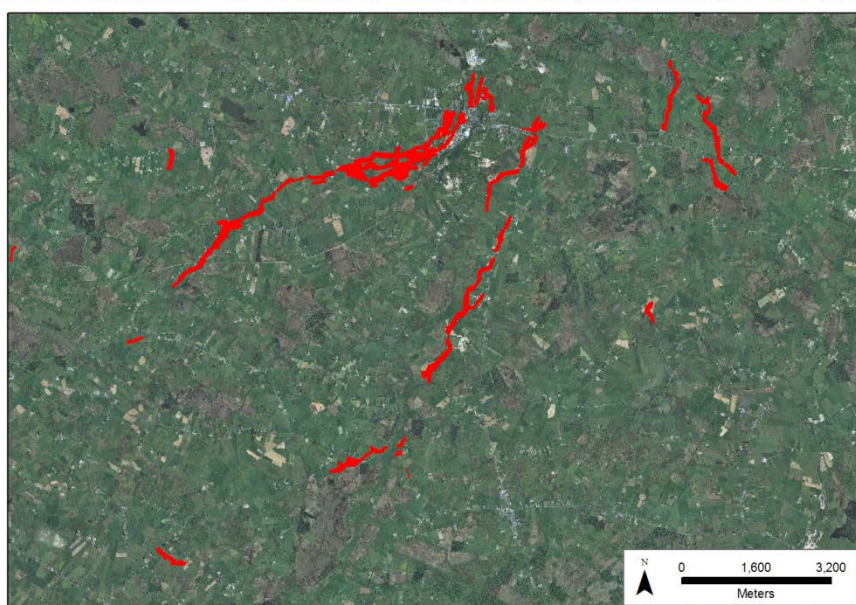
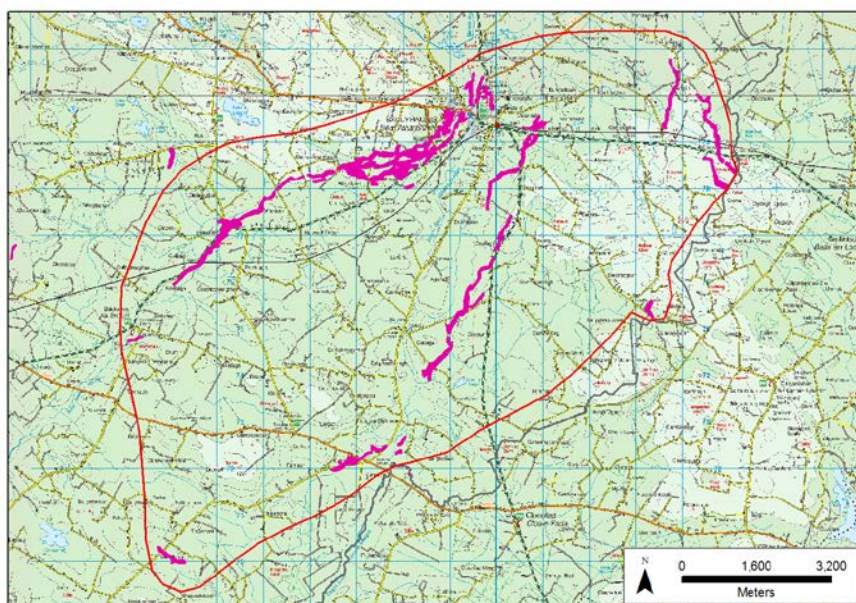
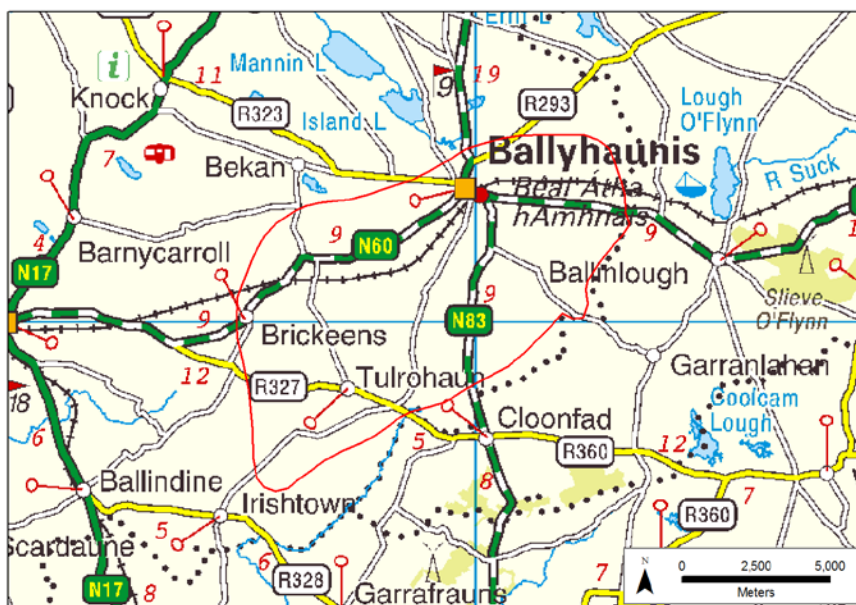
Sand and gravel quarry at esker at Tullaghaun.

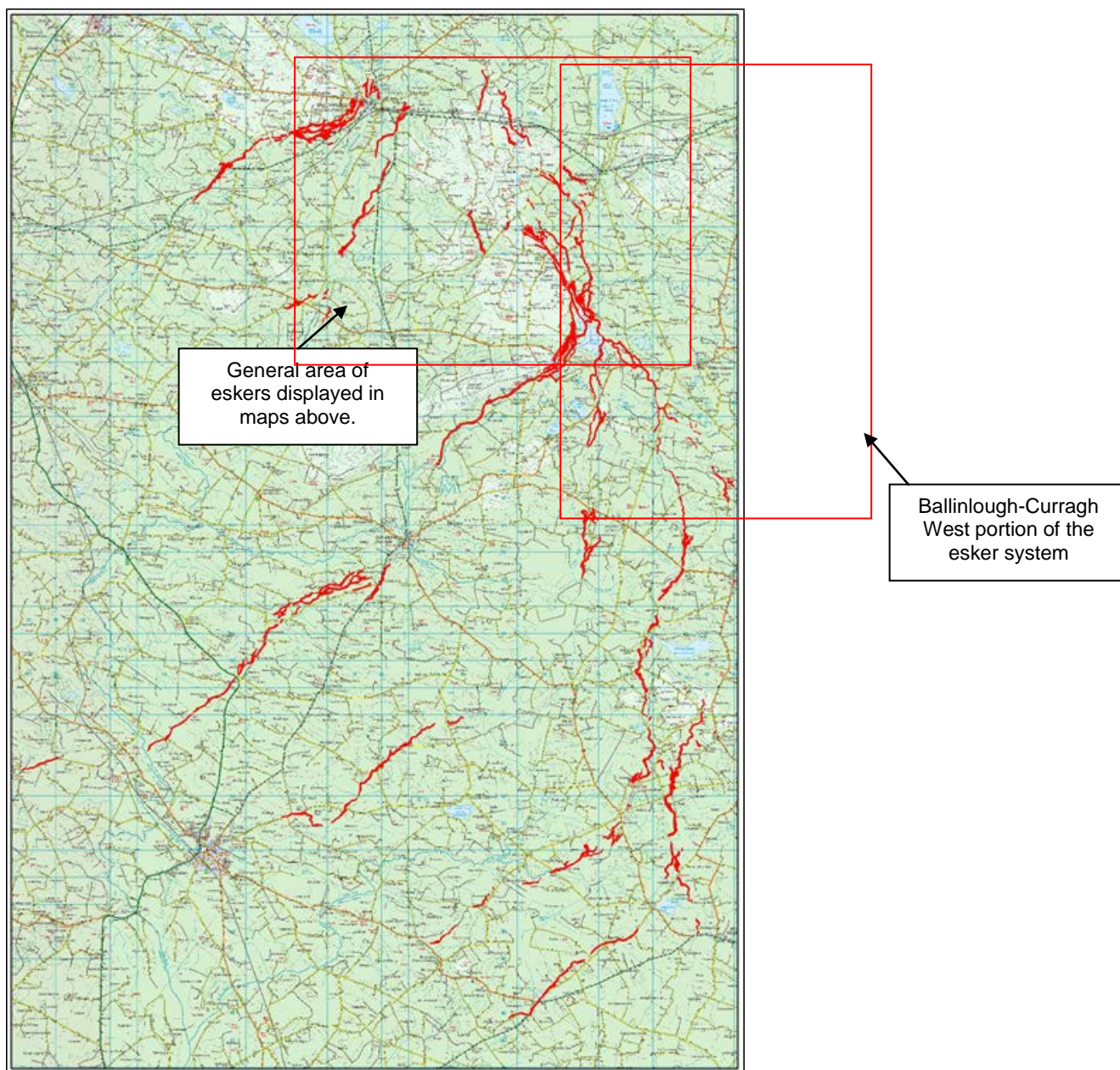


Stone walls draped across an esker at Coolnafarna.



Esker north of Coolnafarna, east of Ballyhaunis.





Location of the Dunmore-Ballyhaunis-Charlestown system
(Co. Mayo, Co. Galway and Co. Roscommon)