

MAYO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Moyne Abbey, Killala
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH8 Lower Carboniferous
TOWNLAND(S)	Moyne, Abbeylands
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Killala
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	15, 22
ITM CO-ORDINATES	523270E 828810N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NO. 24	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 6
GIS Code MO0080	

Outline Site Description

The site comprises disused quarries located 250m north of Moyne Abbey. The quarries are situated some 30m from the low-cliff shoreline of the Moy Estuary, and are sheltered from the Killala Bay by Bartragh Island. They lie within the boundary of the much larger 'Killala Area' site of glaciotectionic ridges.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Lower Carboniferous age oolites (Killala Oolites) of the Mullaghmore Sandstone Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Killala Oolites comprise the upper and last sedimentation phase of the fluvial and marine sedimentary rocks of the Mullaghmore Sandstone Formation (200m thick). The sandy oolite unit comprises cross-bedded carbonate rocks (calcareous sandstones and thin limestones) and represents a coastal flooding event that followed the deposition of the underlying Mullaghmore Sandstone Formation units. Oolite was previously known as roestone, due to the resemblance of the spherical grains (ooids) to fish eggs (roe).

It is recorded that considerable parts of Moyne Abbey (and Killala Round Tower) were constructed from the local oolite stone, with 'burnt sea-shells' used as mortar. As in the poem 'Moyne Abbey' by C.A St. George Knox of Palmerstown, Killala (December 1936):

'No labour did they spare nor cost, upon this church of Moyne
Completely built of oolite stone from quarries which adjoin.'

Site Importance – County Geological Site, may be recommended for geological NHA

The site is a very fine example of oolite rocks in County Mayo.

Management/promotion issues

This site is located 250m north of Moyne Abbey. Access to the quarry is via private grazing land, and permission to access the quarry should be sought from the landowner. Threats to the site include dumping, of which there is evidence of discarded plant machinery in the quarry. The geological heritage of the site could be tied in with the ecclesiastical heritage of Moyne Abbey.



Moyne Abbey oolite quarry, looking NW at the quarry face.



Moyne Abbey oolite quarry, looking east towards the south end of Bartragh Island (distance).



Oolite sample from Moyne Abbey quarry.



Cross-bedding in layer exposed in the quarry face.



Moyne Abbey.

