

OFFALY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Ballynagarbry (Mount Temple) Esker		
Other names used for site	The Garbh Esker, The Moate Esker		
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary		
TOWNLAND(S)	Ballynahinch, Moyally, Parkwood, Burrow, Faheeran		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Moate (County Westmeath), Clara		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	1		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	622050E 738400N (centre of esker)		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	48	GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	12

Outline Site Description

The Ballynagarbry (Mount Temple) Esker and surrounding sands and gravels includes a large accumulation of sands and gravels deposited both under the ice sheet and at its margin as the ice withdrew northwestwards across north Offaly at the end of the last Ice Age.

The majority of the esker system is in County Westmeath, with only a small portion at the southeastern end in County Offaly.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The Ballynagarbry (Mount Temple) Esker and surrounding sands and gravels are formed entirely on Lower Carboniferous limestone rocks in north Offaly. Further northwest, in Westmeath, the esker is formed partially on Devonian Old Red Sandstone rocks.

The eskers themselves are Quaternary in age, having been deposited either under or at the edge of the westward-retreating ice sheet in deglaciation, approximately 14,000 years ago.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The esker ridges are striking features, standing proud of the flat landscape of till (boulder clay) upon which they were deposited.

The esker feature is important in that it records faithfully the ice movement across this area of Offaly during the final phase of deglaciation. Wide belts of associated sands and gravels in Burrow and Faheeran Townlands flank the feature at the east. The sands and gravels within the esker are comprised chiefly of limestone clasts, though occasional sandstone cobbles are seen.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The feature is a high, striking example of a dry sand and gravel ridge, and stands proud of the surrounding landscape. The esker should be designated as a County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

A signboard along the R446 road at the lay-by adjacent to 'The Well' public house, where the forested features can be well seen, might help promote the feature.



Anabranching segments of the Ballynagarbry (Mount Temple) Esker at Burrow.



An exposure into the esker ridge along the R446 at Burrow.



A wooded portion of the esker at Moyally.



A high portion of the esker at Parkwood.

