

# ROSCOMMON - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Arigna Mining Experience</b>		
Other names used for site	Derreenavoggy		
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH15 Economic Geology</b>		
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Derreenavoggy</b>		
<b>NEAREST TOWN</b>	<b>Arigna</b>		
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE</b>	<b>192155 314255</b>		
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1/2 inch Sheet No.</b>	<b>7</b>

## **Outline Site Description**

Disused coal mine and associated spoil heaps made accessible to the public as a visitor attraction, with full visitor centre and underground tour.

## **Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**

The rocks are Upper Carboniferous in age, from the Westphalian Stage, informally known as the Coal Measures. They are a complex of sandstones, siltstones, mudstones and coal horizons formed in a deltaic environment.

## **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

Coal of Carboniferous age forms a main energy source throughout western Europe and America, and has given its name to the time period at around 320 million years ago when it formed. Ireland has several coalfield areas where rocks of this age survive, although they were formerly more widespread, and have been extensively mined. Arigna is one of the two largest deposits, as well as Castlecomer in Kilkenny, and this site very neatly includes nearly all aspects of interest with the rocks and the mines in a well-presented package.

The site has a visitor centre where audio-visual records of coal mining are shown along with physical equipment remains. The highlight is the underground tour in the company of a former miner who demonstrates the geology of the coal deposits and the practical issues involved in extracting it. On accessing the mine, a rock face is preserved under the roof labelled to show the sequence of rock strata. The tour very clearly demonstrates that the coal seams were relatively thin hereabouts, as the miners had to work by hand lying on their sides in a cavity only as thick as the seam. The limits of the site include one of the largest spoil heap areas in the district, demonstrating both the scale of mining that took place until 1990 and the degree of unwanted rock that had to be processed to extract the thin coal seams. Other more minor features of mining interest are included within the site boundary.

## **Site Importance – County Geological Site**

As a preserved and presented site, this is very important in encapsulating the coal mining heritage of the Arigna district, whilst most other sites are significantly degraded since closure of the mines. As a tourist/visitor attraction it is of major importance in Roscommon and deserves to be supported and further enhanced.

## **Management/promotion issues**

The Arigna Mining Experience is run by a limited company and has a range of financial supports as well as visitor income. The support of the County Council will be important into the future, since the level of tourist visitors across the NW region is relatively low, and the Arigna Mining Experience has to work very hard to achieve sustainable visitor numbers.

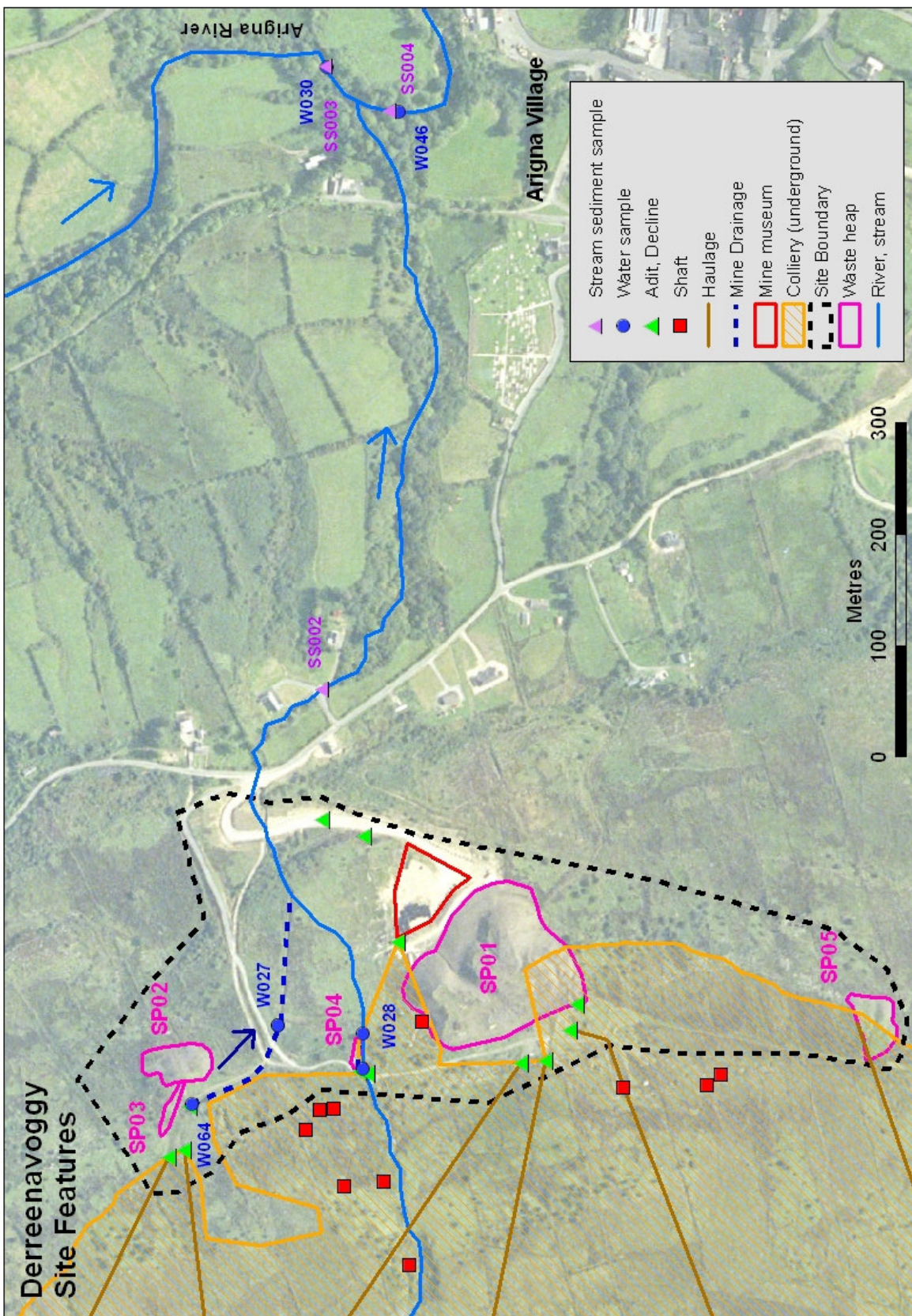


A view of the Arigna Mining Experience visitor centre and car park from the spoil heap above it at Derreenavoggy.



A view of the Arigna Mining Experience visitor centre and car park with the spoil heaps above it at Derreenavoggy.





This map of Derreenavoggy is used with permission, from the EPA-GSI Historic Mine Sites - Inventory and Risk Classification Volume 1, 2009 (see <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/land/mines/>).



