

SLIGO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Mullaghmore Head		
Other names used for site			
TOWNLAND(S)	Mullaghmore		
NEAREST TOWN	Mullaghmore		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	2		
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	170200 358300 = G 702 583		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	16	1/2 inch Sheet No.	7

Outline Site Description

Rock-platform, coastal exposure.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Carboniferous sandstone, siltstone and shale.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Mullaghmore Head is the type area for the Mullaghmore Sandstone Formation, a major stratigraphical unit of the northwest. The alternating shales and thick sandstone of this formation were deposited by a major river **delta** that built out into a tropical sea from a landmass to the north during the Carboniferous. Sedimentary structures, crucial in unravelling the depositional history of the rocks, are abundant and include **cross-bedding**, **grading**, **convolution** and evidence of scouring by river channels. Whilst body fossils are quite scarce (occasional corals, brachiopods, crinoids and orthocones are found) trace fossils are in abundance here. Trace fossils are sedimentary structures left by animals, for example by crawling or burrowing.

Site Importance

The site is of National importance and is to be proposed for NHA designation under the IGH8 Lower Carboniferous theme of the GSI's IGH Programme.

Management/promotion issues

The site is subject to coastal erosion. There are no major problems with the section around the headland, but the western part by Classiebawn Castle may only be accessed along the foreshore and when tides permit.



The cliff section in this photo is approximately 8m in height and displays layers of sandstones dipping to the left. River channels that flowed across a delta during the Carboniferous deposited the two thick beds at the top of the section. These channels cut into the underlying sediments leaving the distinctive shape that we see today.



West coast of Mullaghmore Head
Photos: Conor MacDermot.

