

## TIPPERARY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Birdhill M7 Road Cut</b>
Other names used for site	
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH4 Cambrian-Silurian</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Ballynahinch, Rossfinch</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Birdhill</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>573800E 668630N (centre of section)</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 59</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 18</b>

### Outline Site Description

A long cutting for the M7 Motorway northeast of Junction 27 Birdhill, cuts into a spur of hillside, exposing extensive bedrock in benches.

### Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The road cut is into Silurian aged greywackes and siltstones of the Hollyford Formation, which is mapped all across the Slieve Felim inlier.

### Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Despite the extensive area of the Slieve Felim inlier of Silurian rocks, surrounded by younger Devonian and Carboniferous rocks, there are relatively few exposures. A long road cutting gives as good a representation of the geology as a large quarry, and the Birdhill M7 Road Cut is both deep and long.

The rocks exposed are fairly monotonous grey siltstones and greywackes – originally deposited as turbidite deposits in a deep ocean basin, when storms or earthquakes deposited sediment from shallow waters in gravity flows into the basin. They are prone to weather into very broken rock on the sloping faces and benches.

Although nothing has yet been recorded, they may yield fossils similar to Reafadda Quarry – animals that lived a pelagic life in open water.

### Site Importance – County Geological Site

Although not exposing obviously interesting rocks, the road cut is worth defining as a County Geological Site as a rare representative of the Slieve Felim Silurian rocks. It provides a companion site to Reafadda Quarry, Fantane Quarry and Latteragh Quarry, and especially for Carrigatogher M7 Road Cut to the north, near Nenagh.

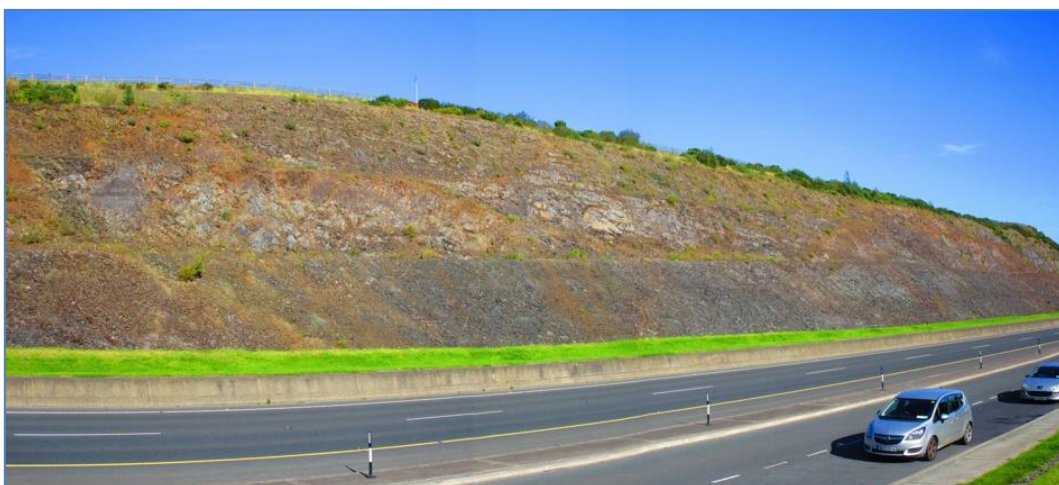
### Management/promotion issues

The road cut is on a motorway and therefore problematic, but there is a lay-by for parking on the southbound carriageway which means that it is possible to stop and get a better appreciation of the rocks, rather than simply driving through at speed. However, the length and depth of the cutting are enough for it to have become a new landmark on the motorway in this stretch. Two overhead bridges carrying minor roads also allow visual access at each end of the cutting.

Weathering means the rock is very broken and will be susceptible to vegetation growth in time and ideal management would keep it clear of trees and shrub vegetation on a periodic basis. Some simple, non-distractive signage to name the site and provide minimal geological information could be provided, but would best be done as part of a strategic approach to all motorway and major road cuttings by the National Transport Authority in conjunction with geological heritage specialists.



A view of the Birdhill M7 Road Cut from the bridge over it at the southwestern end of the site.



A view of the Birdhill M7 Road Cut northern side from the lay-by on the southern side.



A view of the Birdhill M7 Road Cut from the lay-by on the southern side.



