

## **TIPPERARY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT**

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Commons (Slieve Ardagh coalfield)</b>
<b>Other names used for site</b>	
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH15 Economic Geology</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Blackcommon</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Commons</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>630630E 652730N</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 67</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 18</b>

### **Outline Site Description**

Large field near centre of village with old mine buildings, shafts and modern farm structures.

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

Upper Carboniferous (Pennsylvanian 300 – 320 Ma) sandstones, siltstones and shales with, in the youngest sequences, Westphalian coal seams.

### **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

This was the site of extensive mining by the Mining Company of Ireland in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and also of numerous private bell-pit excavations. It contains the largest number of 19<sup>th</sup>-century mine buildings of any site in the district. In addition to the colliery site, the Mining Company of Ireland in 1877 also built the schoolhouse in the village, which essentially developed as a 19<sup>th</sup>-century mine village.

The surface site of the colliery covers c. 2.5 ha. The entrance to the site is through an arch in a long building close to the centre of the village. The old mine manager's house is located at the end of this building. The double-ended engine house that apparently worked two shafts is near the southwest end of the site, close to the Engine shaft. This shaft is within a mound surrounded by brambles and trees and barbed wire and it is still open, with a width at the top of 5.2 m and a measurable depth of almost 8 m. A small waste heap of shale remains beside the site of the second shaft worked by the engine house but the shaft is not visible. Commons Pit, which appears to have been a shaft to underground workings, is now covered by a silage yard and cow shed at the eastern end of the site near the entrance. Other stone buildings on the site have been identified as workshops.

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

This site contains several 19<sup>th</sup> century mine buildings, including the unusual double-ended engine house, as well as an extant open shaft.

### **Management/promotion issues**

The various buildings on the site are in need of conservation if they are to be preserved for the future. The double-ended engine house, in particular, is an unusual building in the context of Irish coalfields or indeed Irish mine sites in general. It is heavily overgrown with vegetation. The site is in private ownership and part of a working farm. Given its proximity to the Old School Mining Museum in the village and its historical significance in the district it could be one of the centrepieces of a heritage trail in Slieve Ardagh. The War House museum nearby, originally the home of one of the mine operators in Commons, is relevant in this context. The existence of the mine museum, run by knowledgeable and committed volunteers, should be the basis for any mine heritage or geotourism initiatives in the district.



Arched entrance to colliery, Commons



Engine house (photo courtesy of Old School Mining Museum Project)



Mine manager's house (photo courtesy of Old School Mining Museum Project)



