

TIPPERARY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Portroe
Other names used for site	Killaloe Slate Quarries
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Killoran, Corbally, Curragh
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Portroe
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	19
ITM CO-ORDINATES	576140E 679000N (Corbally), 574850E 678500N (Killoran)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER 59	GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 18

Outline Site Description

Several abandoned flooded quarries with large waste heaps.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Slates of the Silurian Slieve Bernagh Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The slate quarries at Corbally near Portroe in the Arra Mountains were developed in the early 19th century by the Killaloe Slate Company, producing the so-called Killaloe Slate that was used for roofing many public buildings in Ireland. The quarries were at their most active in the first half of the 20th century but declined in the late 1940s owing to competition from synthetic material. They closed in 1956. Subsequently, a new quarry was developed in the 1990s at Killoran but it too closed after several years' production.

This site includes the two 19th-century quarries around Corbally in the east and the Killoran quarry developed in the 1990s. The Corbally quarries are flooded and surrounded by very large areas of waste rock, with fencing installed at various points around the perimeter. Killoran quarry is more accessible but has become quite overgrown in the last decade. There has been some excavation of weathered material in front of Killoran quarry followed by crushing and grading for fill and possibly walling stone. Until relatively recently, Killoran Slate Quarries operated a retail outlet beside the quarry.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

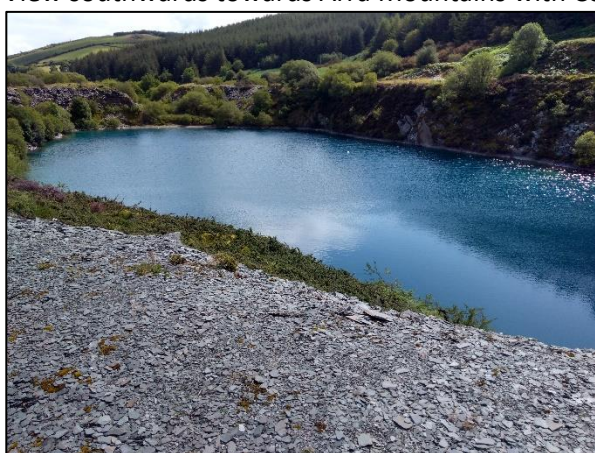
The Killaloe Slate quarries were significant historically and geologically, with their products finding a ready market at home and abroad, and as such should be included as a county geological site.

Management/promotion issues

The quarries are not suitable for promotion and it seems unlikely that they have potential as heritage sites aimed at the general public. Those at Corbally are deep and flooded and steep, unconsolidated piles of waste rock rise up from the road that runs along the northern edge of the site. Killoran quarry is unfenced but recent excavation and processing of rock on the site in front of the quarry has cut off a track that ran around the back of the quarry, affording a view of the interior.



View southwards towards Arra Mountains with Corbally slate quarries visible in front at their base.



Flooded eastern quarry at Corbally quarries, view to east.



Large slate block showing cleavage surface at angle to bedding



Killoran quarry, as left following closure in 1990s.

