

WESTMEATH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Portnashangan Quarry
Other names used for site	N4 Quarry
IGH THEME	IGH8 Lower Carboniferous
TOWNLAND(S)	Portnashangan
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Mullingar
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	12
ITM CO-ORDINATES	641750E 759100N (centre of quarry)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	41 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 12

Outline Site Description

This site comprises a disused, roadside quarry.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The quarry is excavated in Carboniferous Limestone of the Derravaragh Cherts – a formation of cherty limestone in this region. The quarry was seemingly excavated for N4 road improvements and was a short lived operation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The quarry provides a well exposed section within the Derravaragh Cherts Formation, showing the limestone typical of a belt from Lough Owel, northeastwards to beyond Lough Lene. It comprises limestone beds deposited in a fairly deep water basin, broadly related to the 'Calp' or Lucan Formation of the Dublin to Longford area. However the presence of chert within the limestone in the Lough Derravaragh area makes it a separate mappable unit of rocks. Chert (a non-crystalline form of silica like flint) occurs as discrete nodules and discontinuous beds.

The rocks are a fairly monotonous grey colour with the chert nodules and bands also appearing as a slightly darker grey. The rocks are mostly in medium thickness beds which are roughly horizontal, but there are localised features of sedimentological interest.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The sparsity of natural exposure and the very limited nature of quarrying into limestone bedrock in Westmeath means that this site is a valuable County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

The quarry is not particularly suitable for general promotion although the rock faces are not high or unstable. It is likely to be of interest primarily to geologists only.



General panoramic view of the main quarry face, looking south.



Overview of the quarry from the northwestern rim.



Dark grey chert band within a limestone bed.

