

WESTMEATH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Streamstown Esker
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Killarechurch, Killeenbrack, Carn, Clonyrina, Killeenagh, Creeve, Kilnalug, Streamstown, Lissavra Big
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Streamstown
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	24, 31
ITM CO-ORDINATES	628475E 743555N (central portion of esker feature)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	48 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 12

Outline Site Description

The Streamstown Esker comprises a long, linear series of esker sand and gravel segments deposited under the ice sheet as the ice withdrew northwards across north Westmeath at the end of the last Ice Age.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The Streamstown Esker is formed within an area dominated by bedrock of Lower Carboniferous limestone. The esker itself is Quaternary in age, having been deposited under the northward-retreating ice sheet during deglaciation, approximately 14,000 years ago.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Streamstown Esker is one of a series of north-south oriented eskers that lie just north of the east-west oriented central Irish Midlands esker network. This esker comprises just under seven kilometres of ridge segments (beads); each a narrow, sharp-crested ridge of coarse-grained sediments which trends north to south (in the down-ice direction).

The esker ridge is a striking feature, standing proud of the flat landscape of till (boulder clay) upon which it was deposited. A road follows much of the length of the crest of the feature, especially around Streamstown Village itself. Intact portions around Streamstown and further north in Killeenagh Townland are especially impressive. In both localities the esker is comprised of a raised, elevated ridge of sands and gravels. The sands and gravels within the esker feature are comprised chiefly of limestone clasts.

The esker feature is important in that it records faithfully the ice movement across this portion of north Westmeath which was along its orientation, *i.e.* effectively north to south. Associated sands and gravels along the extent of the esker feature, especially just northeast and southwest of Streamstown Village, flanking the ridge, are probably part of associated ice marginal fans.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

The feature is a high, striking example of a dry sand and gravel ridge, and stands proud of the surrounding landscape. This esker and the associated sands and gravels in the locality seem to be a good example of a deglacial, meltwater-deposited complex, with portions deposited under the ice (esker), and portions at the ice margin (fans).

Management/promotion issues

This system comprises a well-defined landform sequence and should be listed as a County Geological Site. As with many eskers on the Irish landscape, the ridge carries a road across otherwise lowlying land, and the route is most likely a very ancient trackway. A signboard in Streamstown Village, where the feature passes nearby, would help promote the feature.



An esker segment in Kilnalug Townland, looking southeast from the roadside.



Esker ridges and interspersed hollows (kettle holes) in Streamstown townland.



An esker segment in Carn Townland, looking southeast from the roadside in Killeenbrack Townland. Silage bales are placed along the esker bead.



