

WICKLOW - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Ballyknockan
Other names used for site	Ballyknockan Quarries
IGH THEME	IGH 15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Ballyknockan
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Blessington
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	10
ITM CO-ORDINATES	700520E 707150N (crossroads in village)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	56
GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO: 16	

Outline Site Description

Inactive granite quarries are surrounded by a dispersed village with many features related to the quarrying of stone and the skills of craftsmen stonemasons in the past.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The granite rock is of Devonian age from around 400 million years ago.

Main Geological Interest

The site was probably the most important area for supplying cut stone blocks of granite for the construction of many of Dublin City's major public buildings. The granite is no longer quarried, although a few stonemasons still work on monumental and gravestone orders in the village, mainly using stockpiled stone. The streets, buildings and walls around the village are highly visible reminders of the former industrial past of Ballyknockan. Building construction, field boundary walls and fence posts, partial sculptures and other features scattered around the quarries all exemplify the pride and skill of the stonemasons who worked here since the quarries were opened in 1824.

Site Importance - County Geological Site

The economic importance of the stone quarrying industry to the growth of Dublin City was significant, and the industrial and cultural heritage of Ballyknockan is more important than the pure geology of the granite that was exploited here.

Management/promotion issues

There are many factors to consider here, given that a local committee has made considerable efforts in the past to raise the profile of the stone quarrying heritage, with monuments to the workers, and to individuals placed at strategic points around the village, and signs approaching the village. In addition past efforts have meant that the Heritage Plan includes an action to: Support a "Ballyknockan Granite Park" initiative. However that particular local committee is seemingly defunct in 2014.

There is a definite need to promote the appreciation of the local stone cutting tradition, but it needs to be driven by local, community led, upward efforts, rather than imposed from above by the County Council or any other agency. There are some local individuals with a wish to develop more business in Ballyknockan founded upon the stone cutting tradition, as well as to preserve the heritage of the village and these should be supported, along with relevant partners such as the Geological Survey of Ireland, the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland and others.



The main quarried area, formerly Creedon's Quarry viewed from the road to the south.



The Ballyknockan Inn, formerly the quarry owner's residence, showing many fine details of stone dressing.



Overgrown old quarry.



Madonna carving, fencepost and view down the Horse Lane, with 2.5m high walls in places.



