

WICKLOW - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Glenmalure
Other names used for site	<i>Gleann Molúra</i>
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary, IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Camenabologue, Conavalla, Baravore, Ballinagoneen, Ballinaskea, Cullentragh, Clonkeen, Ballinafunshoge, Corrasillagh, Carrawaystick, Clohernagh, Ballyboy, Drumgoff, Carriglinneen, Fananierin, Kirikee, Ballinabarny, Ballinacor
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Rathdrum
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	22, 23, 29
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	707130E 693610N (centre of valley)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	56
	GSI Bedrock 1:100,000 Sheet No. 16

Outline Site Description

The Glenmalure valley is a deep 20km-long glacial valley in the central Wicklow Mountains, one of the longest glacial valleys in the country. The site extent includes a number of hanging valleys along each side of Glenmalure (e.g. Fraughan Rock, or Baravore, Glen), which were formed by feeder glaciers into the main valley during the last Ice Age.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The valley covers a large area underlain by the late-Caledonian (405 Ma) Leinster Granite bedrock and its wallrocks. The granite is part of the Lugnaquilla Pluton, one of the five plutons that comprise the Leinster Granite and various granite varieties occur along the valley. The wallrocks consist of various metasedimentary lithologies of the Ordovician Maulin Formation. The granite is cut by slightly younger quartz veins containing lead and zinc mineralization. The valley itself and the glacial features within it date from the last Ice Age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Glenmalure is a spectacular example of a glaciated U-shaped valley, with oversteepened cliff sides and a flat floor. Glenmalure is straight, steep-sided, and rocky, just under 20 kilometres long, 800m wide and up to 350m deep.

The base of the valley hosts a number of cross-valley moraines, as well as particularly fine lateral moraines along the southwestern side of the valley. Outwash deposits floor the lower end of the valley, from Greenan as far as Avoca.

There are abandoned mine sites at Ballinafunshoge, half-way along the valley, and at Baravore and Ballinagoneen near the head of the valley. The Ballinafunshoge site, which contains two adits, a shaft and large areas of mine, was in operation by 1800, one of the first sites to operate in the Glendalough-Glenmalure district. At Baravore, five well-defined adits, the remains of two crusher houses and a reservoir can be observed. The Ballinagoneen site contains three spoil heaps below two adits with a third adit apparently hidden beneath spoil. These adits appear to have been exploration rather than production adits, as there is no record of any ore output from Ballinagoneen.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The Glenmalure mine workings are of interest as the oldest of the lead mines along the margin of the Leinster Granite. The valley itself is a spectacular example of a glacial valley containing fine examples of glacial features throughout.

Management/promotion issues

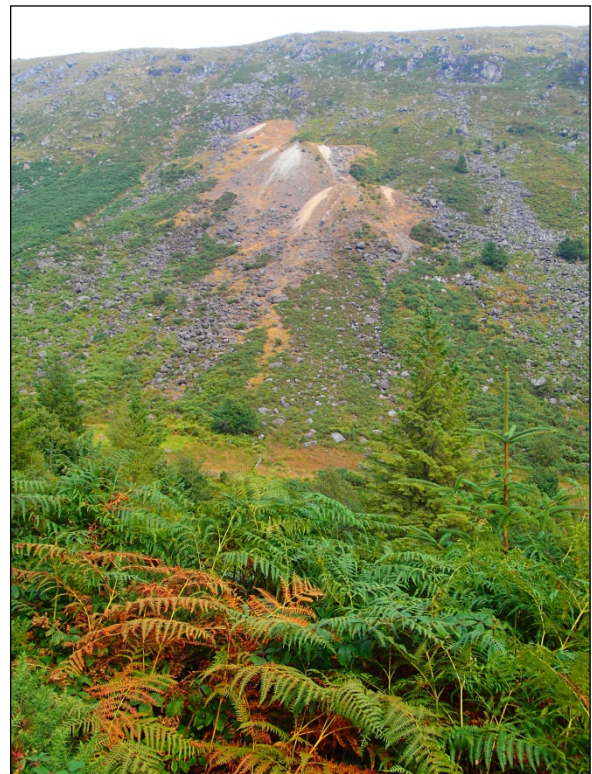
Much of the site is within the Wicklow Mountains SAC, SPA and proposed NHA, as well as the National Park. This is a popular walking route. Few signboards have been erected and much more information could be provided to describe the mine features and host rock geology and to illustrate the glacial processes that led to formation of the valley.



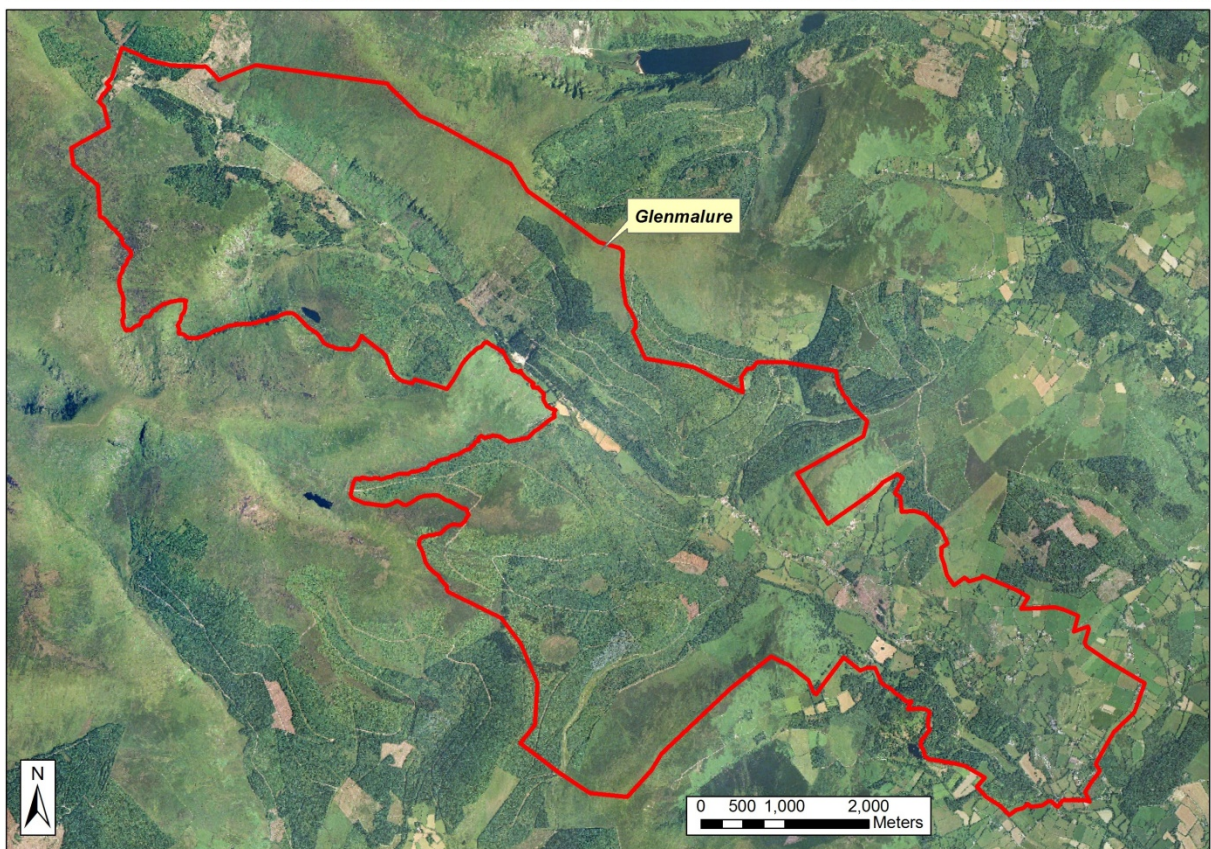
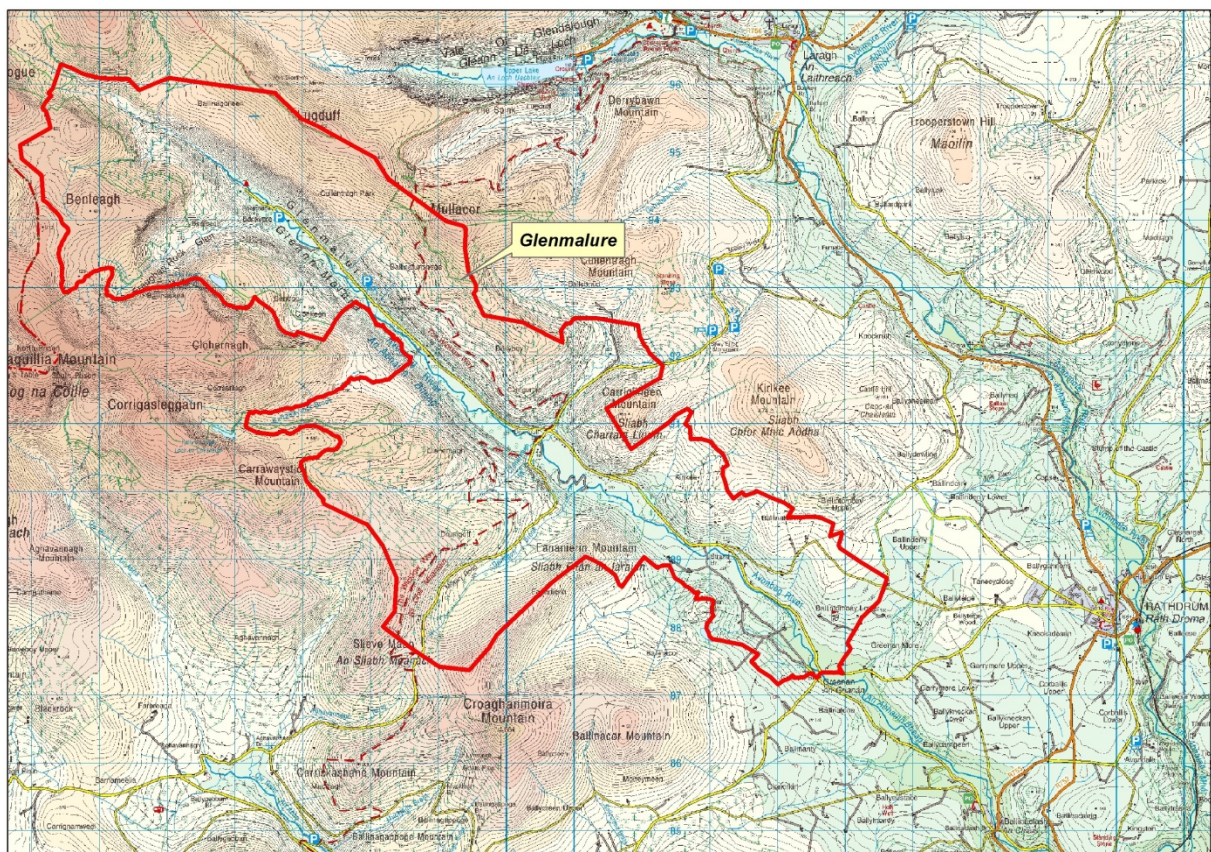
The Glenmalure Valley, looking northwest.

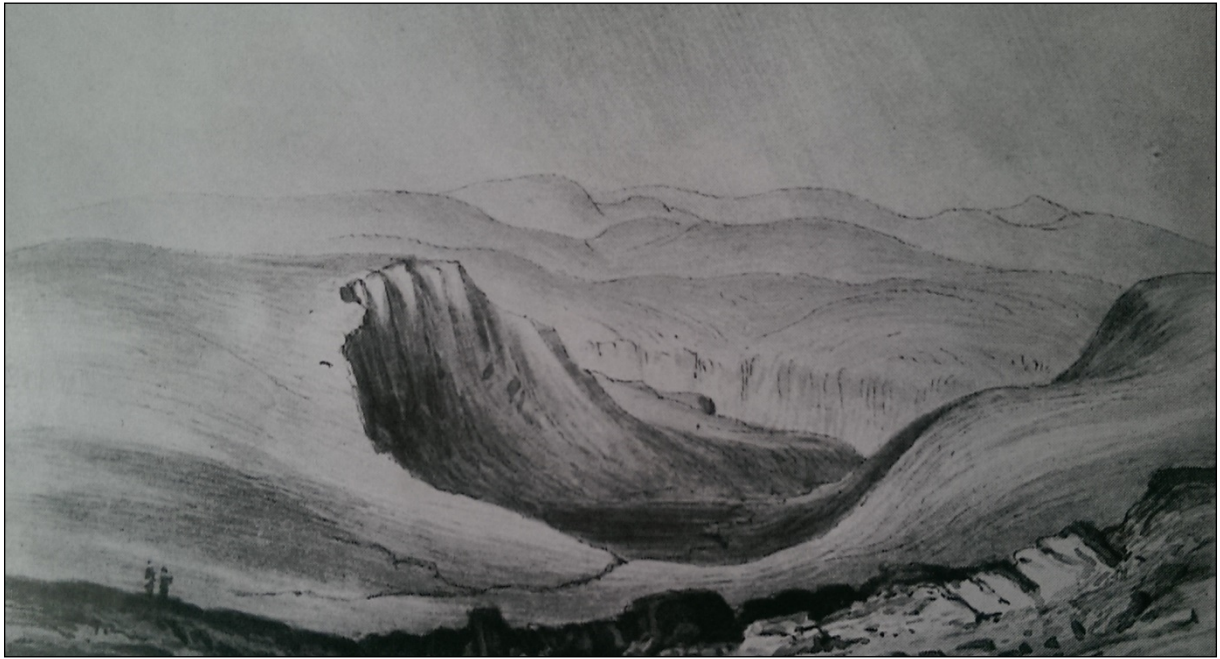


Ballinafunshoge mine site in the central portion of the valley, looking northeast.



Spoil heaps below the Ballinagoneen adit on the north side of the valley near the Youth Hostel.





Baravore Glen, viewed from the west, as painted by George Victor du Noyer in the nineteenth century.