

## WICKLOW - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Goldmines River</b>
Other names used for site	Goldmine River
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH15 Economic Geology</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Ballinasilloge, Ballinagore, Ballinvally Lower, Ballinvally Upper</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Woodenbridge</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>39, 40</b>
<b>NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE</b>	<b>715791E 674799N (centre of area)</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>62 GSI 1:100,000 Bedrock Sheet No. 19</b>

### **Outline Site Description**

The site consists of a c. 1.5km-long section of river, typically 2-3 m wide. Both banks have a thick cover of trees and shrubs.

### **Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**

The bedrock consists of slates, siltstones and felsic volcanic rocks of the Ordovician Kilmacrea Formation.

### **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

Goldmines River was the site of Wicklow's gold rush of 1795 following the discovery of placer gold in the river gravels below Ballinagore Bridge. The source of the gold has never been satisfactorily established but it has been suggested to have been within the volcanic and sedimentary rocks underlying the Ballinasilloge – Ballycoog ridge to the west. Minor bedrock was detected in the 1980s in arsenopyrite-rich quartz veins east of the river.

The site today retains no obvious features linking it to the era of the gold rush, unsurprising after over 200 years. It is included here largely because of its historic importance. While there have been reports of individuals finding small amounts of panned gold, sufficient in one instance for a wedding ring, and the National Museum has some nuggets in its possession, as a geological site, the Goldmines River is essentially of historic interest.

### **Site Importance – County Geological Site**

This is the site of Wicklow's gold rush of 1795 when placer gold was discovered in the gravels and is of historic interest.

### **Management/promotion issues**

The possibility of promoting this site as a themed, activity-based site centred on gold panning was considered, but is not recommended. The site is in a remote location, surrounded by pasture. Consideration could be given to developing such a site downriver, closer to Woodenbridge. However, the site could be included in any geological or historical heritage trails and in this context a signboard located at Ballinagore Bridge should be considered.



View westwards upstream along Goldmines River towards Ballinagore Bridge. Ballinagore is in background, with Croghan Kinshelagh beyond the summit of the ridge.



Ballinagore Bridge view from upstream. The main area of historic gold workings commences just downstream of the bridge.





