

WICKLOW - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Lough Bray
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Powerscourt
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Glencree, Enniskerry
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	6
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	713405E 715950N (arête between corries)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	56 GSI Bedrock 1:100,000 Sheet No. 16

Outline Site Description

The Lough Bray site consists of two lakes; Lough Bray Upper and Lough Bray Lower, which occupy two of the most accessible corries in Ireland, 2 kilometres south of Glencree Village and just off the Military Road.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The features were formed during the Quaternary (Ice Age), by glacier ice scouring out two deep, armchair-shaped hollows at the northeastern edge of the Wicklow Mountains. The majority of the features therefore comprise ice-scoured bedrock, which is coarse-grained granite. The granite is part of the Lugnaquilla Pluton which is one of the five plutons that comprise the late-Caledonian (405 Ma) Leinster Granite batholith.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

These corries have almost-vertical backwalls up to 200m in height. Two tarns (glacial lakes) floor the features and the corries and lakes are bounded on their eastern sides by a series of impressive moraines. These have been dissected by Holocene (post-glacial) streams draining the lakes.

The moraines comprise well-drained, bouldery material, and the area around and east of Lough Bray is littered with large erratic boulders up to 10m across. Many of these erratics weigh several hundred tonnes and bear testament to the power of the ice sheet which transported them. Small moraines sit on top of a very large and impressive moraine feature, which dams the upper lake. A walk along the crest of one of the smaller moraines will provide an excellent overview of similar moraines ascending, like a staircase, the larger moraine.

Both corries are separated by an arête feature, which is a thin, almost knife-like, ridge of rock formed when two glaciers erode adjacent depressions. Here the arête is called Eagle's Nest or Eagle's Crag. Owing to the way the granite joints erode here, there are some unusual rock formations.

On the plateau on top of the corries, much of the covering blanket peat is eroding, and distinct peat hags are seen in places. Fine views can be had from here of the Glencree Valley to the east, Kippure to the west, and the central portion of the Wicklow Mountains to the south.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; may be recommended for Geological NHA

This is a fine example of two corries and an arête, with bounding moraine features. The site is already part of the Wicklow Mountains SAC and proposed NHA (Site Number 002122), as well as being within the National Park. The Upper Lake is part of the Wicklow Mountains SPA.

Management/promotion issues

A small car park in an old quarry above Lough Bray Upper provides a good view of the large outer moraine to the north, and the smaller moraines right at the lakeside to the west. There is a well-defined path across the moraine and up the arête, and rough trails across the top of the Upper Lake also. A promotional signboard at the roadside quarry might prove useful.



The corrie at Upper Lough Bray, viewed from the north.



The main moraine ridge, with smaller moraines thereon, viewed from Eagle's Crag.



The corrie at Lower Lough Bray, viewed from the south.



View north across Upper Lough Bray, and into the Glenree Valley.



