

WICKLOW - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Slieveroe lane and rail cutting		
Other names used for site	Slieveroe		
IGH THEME	IGH 2 Precambrian to Devonian Palaeontology		
TOWNLAND(S)	Slieveroe		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Rathdrum		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	30		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	721040E 689250N (centre of exposures)		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	62	GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO:	16

Outline Site Description

A lane and a short section of railway cutting.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks are of Ordovician age, and are composed of fossiliferous mudstones in the lane and black slates with graptolite fossils in the railway cutting.

Main Geological Interest

Slieveroe Townland has a railway cutting which has yielded graptolite fossils from black slates and a laneway which has yielded a rich assemblage of brachiopods and trilobites and other shelly invertebrates. It is important because the association of the faunas allows correlation of two different biozonal schemes which are widely used internationally in correlation of Ordovician rocks. The site also provides the only real constraint on the age of the economically important volcanic rocks of the Avoca district. These have been mined for copper over centuries, but understanding the age and formation of the rocks is important for any future exploitation.

The shelly fossils from the lane include many trilobite and brachiopod species, as well as many other invertebrate groups. It is the type locality for several species, i.e. the locality from which they were originally described.

Site Importance - County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The importance of the site is both historical and present, since Avoca is still an exploration target for minerals. However, there is scope for further examination and refinement of the knowledge of the site and its faunas, and this is an important reason for protection of the site. It should receive NHA designation to ensure continued accessibility to palaeontologists and others.

Management/promotion issues

Any excavations required, such as for agricultural or developmental purposes, would be beneficial in providing new sections for examination, but any major changes in land use should require permission before commencement. If the breen was tarmacaded over it would destroy the accessibility to bedrock, which effectively has to be reached by digging. The black slates in the railway cutting are now considerably overgrown, but could be cleared relatively simply. Access to the railway was formerly through a farmyard and a level crossing gate, but it is now not possible from any immediately local point.



The lane is heavily vegetated and little used, and fossiliferous rock is found mainly by digging a trench.



Left: The railway cutting at Slieveroe looking east, c. 1998.



Right: The lane looking south, with person at site of trenches c. 1998.



