

WEXFORD - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Barrystown Mine		
Other names used for site			
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology		
TOWNLAND(S)	Barrystown		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Wellingtonbridge		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	46		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	685032E 612300N		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	77	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	23

Outline Site Description

A disused steam engine house in the middle of a pasture field.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The mineral veins that were once mined here are of unknown age but they are hosted in Cambrian rocks of the Booley Bay Formation. The engine house itself is probably from a period of working in the mid-1800s.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This historic silver and lead mine was worked over several centuries. There are some reports of intermittent mining from the 8th to the 20th centuries. It is presumed that ore was supplied from here to the mint (for producing coins) at Clonmines across Bannow Bay in the time of King Charles 1, although that working ceased in 1565. Some 445 tonnes of ore is recorded from extraction between 1847 and 1850. Along with many historical mine workings, some re-examination took place during the First World War, and lead veins were proved to the east of the old workings by a Colonel Johnson. Quartz-siderite veins with argentiferous (silver bearing) galena (lead ore) and some sphalerite and chalcopyrite mineral was recorded.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This is a very modest site, with mostly historical interest, but in view of the rarity of mining heritage in Wexford, it is worth recording as a County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

The engine house is in a poor state and will not last very long without some intervention to stabilise it and prevent collapse. Timber lintels in windows, doors and functional openings are all rotted and masonry collapse is taking hold. The extensive ivy is also a problem. No lightning conductor was seen, and if none exists a lightning strike could destroy the chimney. The brick top on the chimney is still in a near complete state.

By comparing historical maps showing the positions of shafts and more recent aerial photographs and other photos (e.g. page 36, Plate 8 of the GSI Map Report for Sheet 23 – South Wexford) it is apparent that much levelling of ground has taken place, eliminating evidence of spoil heaps, locations of shafts and any other mine buildings.



The engine house at Barrystown looking northwest across Bannow Bay.



The brick top of the chimney survives better than many such structures.



Precarious masonry in need of consolidation and conservation work.

