

WEXFORD - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Forth Mountain
Other names used for site	Sliabh Fothart
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Shelmaliere Commons, Bargy Commons, Forth Commons
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Wexford
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	42
ITM CO-ORDINATES	697985E 619190N (summit)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	77
GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	23

Outline Site Description

A 239m high forest-covered hill capped with prominent rocky tors.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Bedrock is Cambrian age quartzite with beds of shale and schist. Periglacial features (tors, ground frost cracks, blockfields) are Quaternary in age, dating from the last Ice Age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Forth Mountain is a prominent quartzite hill to the west of Wexford Town. The hill hosts a variety of periglacial features (features formed near glacial areas where perennial freezing and thawing occurs) including tors (isolated, protruding rock outcrops) and blockfields. The main tors on Forth Mountain are (south to north): Carrickatinna Rock, Skeator Rock, Raven Rock, Clorane, Drooping Rock, Carrickadee Rocks, Ravens Rock, Carrickashinna Rock, Carrigfoyle Rock, Windgap Rocks. The lowest tor is at 191m elevation, and highest at 239m. Other periglacial features include involutions and fossil frost (infilled till) cracks (1.4m deep) - both considered to frozen ground phenomena. The lower slopes of the hill are littered with quartzite blocks ranging from boulder size to cobbles. The occurrence of erratics and glacial till, up to 170m elevation, indicates that ice reached at least this height. Silt cappings on stones in the lower soil horizons are also thought to be periglacial. There is also evidence for movement of non-glacial material downslope due to gelifluction (the flow of debris and water-saturated soil that occurs above frozen ground). It has been suggested that the tors are the product of differential weathering rates of shale and quartzite, and not solely due to periglacial conditions. A chronological sequence for the formation of the periglacial features on Forth Mountain was proposed by Culleton (1984).

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This is an important County Geological Site considering the variety of landforms and features associated with periglacial conditions that prevailed in the area during the last glaciation.

Management/promotion issues

Shelmaliere/Forth Mountain is in the majority a Coillte owned and managed area. There are local trails in the area, but advice should be sought locally before embarking on any hiking. The geological heritage and in particular the interesting tor features of Forth Mountain would be an ideal component of any material produced on this area in future. An agreed walking trail could be produced (e.g. Slí na Sláinte route, Healthy Heart route) guiding walkers along a route that allows good views of the tors.



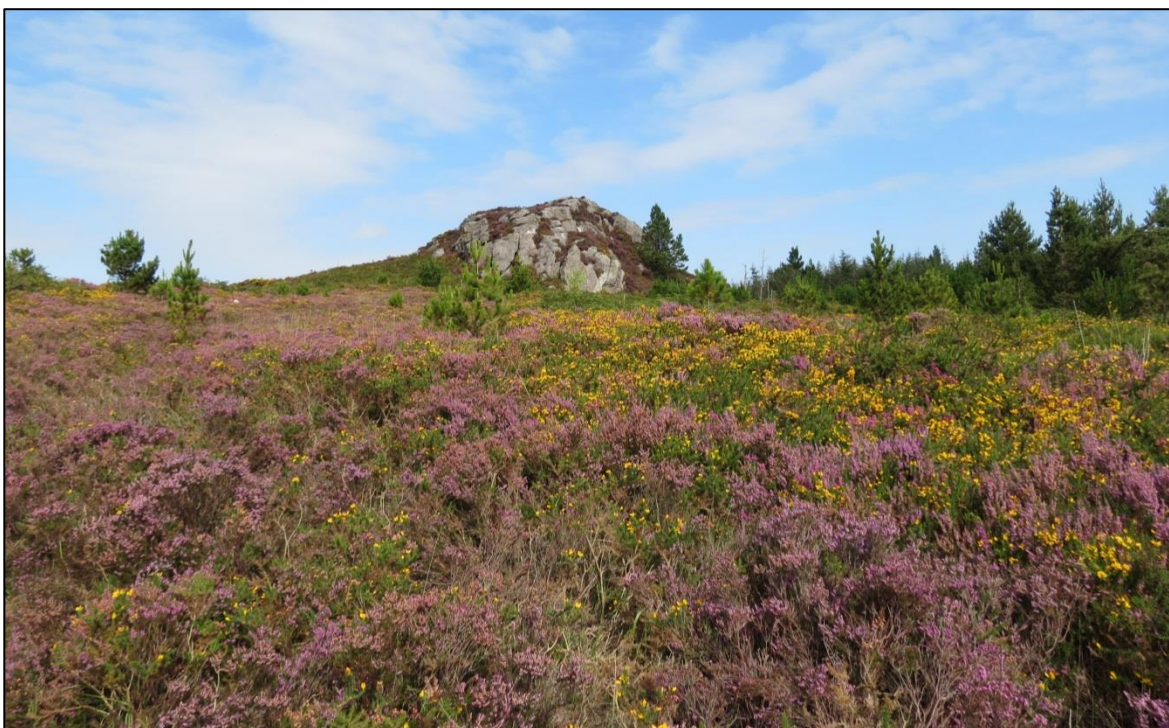
Ravens Rock tor viewed looking north from road near access entrance to Shelmaliere Quarry.



Carrickadee Rock tor with telecoms mast.



Marian Shrine Mass Rock tor and nearby tor.



Carrickatinna Rock at south end of Forth Mountain (near R733 road).

