

WEXFORD - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Graigue Great	
Other names used for site	Millstone Hole	
IGH THEME	IGH15 Economic Geology	
TOWNLAND(S)	Graigue Great	
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Fethard	
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	60	
ITM CO-ORDINATES	677600E 602060N	
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	76	GSI Bedrock 1:100,000 Sheet No. 23

Outline Site Description

A short section of coast just north east of Barry's Gate on a slight headland.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks here are Devonian in age, informally called 'the Old Red Sandstone', but classed as the Harrylock Formation. There are thick conglomerate beds and coarse grained red sandstones. The same formation outcrops across the peninsula, and was also quarried at the companion site of Harrylock Bay.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This site is included as a key source of millstones in historical times. It owes its existence simply to people recognising the value of a very specific lithology. From Medieval times up to early Modern times in Ireland, suitable rock types for millstones in wind and water powered mills would have been highly prized. The quartz conglomerates both here and at Harrylock Bay clearly provided a suitable rock, indicated by the large numbers of circular 'dishes' or scars from where stones were extracted. A circular ring was chiselled out for the outer edge and a small hole in the centre for the axle. Water and wooden wedges could then help split the stone off along a natural bedding plane.

Watercolour paintings by George Victor Du Noyer from the mid 1800's illustrate the site and there are suggestions of cranes in use. However millstones could also have been floated off rocks strapped to boats using the rising tide.

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

This is an important industrial archaeology site which should be protected through recognition as a County Geological Site. When the IGH15 Economic Geology Theme is fully assessed for the best sites on a national basis this site may be one that is recommended for NHA status.

Management/promotion issues

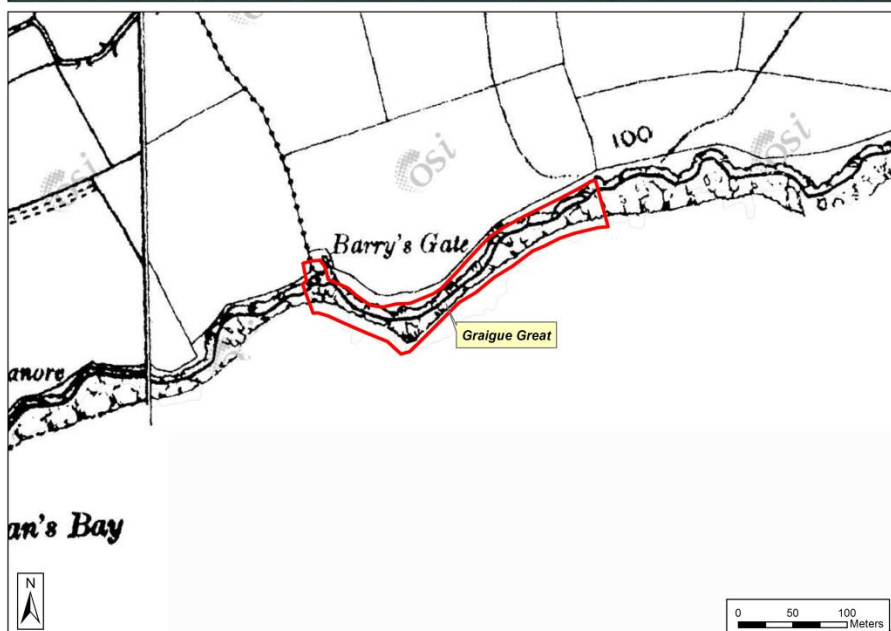
The site could possibly be promoted, obviously depending on suitable access and landowner permission being agreed and organised. However it not easily accessible at all at present and there is no path or track to the site.



There are more than 15 'dishes' where millstones were removed in this view.



A series of multiple 'dishes' where millstones were removed.





Watercolour by George Victor Du Noyer of millstone quarrying at Graigue Great.



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