

KILKENNY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Bennettsbridge M9 Cutting		
Other names used for site			
IGH THEME	IGH 8 Carboniferous		
TOWNLAND(S)	Rathclogh (southern cutting) Kilree (northern cutting)		
NEAREST TOWN	Bennettsbridge		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	Kilkenny 23		
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	253641 148840 to 253906 149100 (east side, southern cut) 254119 149312 to 254403 149548 (east side, northern cut) 253639 148875 to 253887 149118 (west side, southern cut) 24115 249339 to 254396 249571 (west side, northern cut)		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	67	1/2 inch Sheet No.	19

Outline Site Description

Road cutting in the M9 motorway, approximately 2km north of junction 9, in two parts with relatively low cliffs of rock. Each part is approximately 365m long.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks are of Carboniferous age (approximately 330 million years). They are probably part of the Ballyadams Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The cutting has low cliffs of limestone between 2 and 4m high. The beds of limestone are nearly horizontal throughout the sections. There are localised sections of weathered rock, with red clay infills and brown stained joints, over 4m in length at one point. This solution weathering of limestone near the surface of the bedrock is called epikarst and is well developed along much of the exposure here. Fossil coral colonies of *Lithostrotion* are clearly evident in the section, occurring prolifically in certain beds. Colonies are mostly around 30-50 cm in diameter and around 30cm high. In parts there are 0.5 – 1m thick massed colonies of coral. Some fossil brachiopod shells and gastropods (snails) are also present.

Glacial striae, which are scratches along the top of the bedrock surface scraped by ice, are seen in the central portion of the east side of the northern cut, and are oriented 336° to 156°. These show that the ice moving over the locality during the last ice age moved along this direction, north-northwest to south-southeast. As well as this, 6m-8m depth of glacial till is seen on top of much of bedrock along the eastern cutting.

Site Importance- County Geological Site

The site is of County Geological Site importance as a well exposed representative section of Carboniferous limestone in Kilkenny, where it is otherwise very poorly exposed. Further comparisons by experts in Carboniferous limestone geology may indicate this site is of national importance as representative of otherwise very poorly exposed stratigraphy in the southeast of Ireland.

Management/promotion issues

This road cutting is completely unsuitable for any general public visits as it is on a motorway.



The cutting looking north on the east side.



Fossil coral colony on the west side.



Massed coral colonies in single beds.



Epikarst – highly weathered top section.



Striations made by boulders in ice passing.



Fossil coral colony on the east side.



Panorama view of the cutting looking south from the west side.

