

KILKENNY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Kiltorcan Old Quarry
Other names used for site	Kiltorcan Plant Quarry
IGH THEME:	IGH 2, 10 (Precambrian to Devonian Palaeontology, Devonian)
TOWNLAND(S)	Kiltorcan
NEAREST TOWN	Ballyhale
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	32
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	255690 134525 = S 55690 34525
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	67 1/2 inch Sheet No. 19

Outline Site Description

A disused and now overgrown quarry, within a pasture field.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Latest Devonian Kiltorcan Formation chloritic siltstones and sandstones.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Old Quarry at Kiltorcan has been internationally known for its rich assemblage of fossil ferns since 1853. As well as the large and spectacular plant fossils, the site has yielded freshwater bivalve, crustacean and fish fossils - providing a well preserved snapshot of life at the end of the Devonian when significant evolution amongst plants was taking place. It also represents a whole assemblage from one particular environment, more or less in situ, from a geological period when few fossils are generally preserved.

Site Importance

The disused quarry at Kiltorcan is largely the result of three systematic excavations for plant fossils. The Kiltorcan flora has become internationally known, with some important taxa, although it has not been fully documented by palaeobotanists. The site is of international importance and is to be designated as an NHA.

Management/promotion issues

This site is privately owned and is unlikely to yield fossils to a general collector. Three major excavations on a systematic basis have taken place, and any future work needs to be organised as a professional project, involving the National Museum, GSI and other partners in order to maximise the scientific benefit. There has been some dumping of concrete rubble in one part of the quarry and this needs removing before any future work on site.



Left: A view of the old quarry.
Below left: Tipping of rubble waste into the south part of the quarrying.
Below: A fern like plant fossil from Kiltorcan Old Quarry from the Geological Survey of Ireland collection.

Kiltorcan Old Quarry

