

FINGAL - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Ireland's Eye		
Other names used for site			
IGH THEME:	IGH 4 (Cambrian-Silurian)		
TOWNLAND(S)	Ireland's Eye		
NEAREST TOWN	Howth		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	15, 16		
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	329000 241000 = O 29 41		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	50	1/2 inch Sheet No.	16

Outline Site Description

Entire island with cliff sections and inland outcrop exposures.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Cambrian greywacke, sandstone and quartzite of the Bray Group.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Ireland's Eye displays some of the best exposed cliff sections and inland exposures of Cambrian rocks in Fingal. They complement and are closely related to those on Howth Head. These rocks consist of greywacke, sandstone and quartzite, and were deposited in a marine environment during the initial opening stages of the Iapetus Ocean (over 510 million years ago). On the north-east side of the island are a number of large sea stacks. These impressive coastal geomorphology features were carved out of the surrounding cliffs by the constant erosive power of the sea. These stacks of sandstone and quartzite help give Ireland's Eye its distinctive appearance from the mainland. They are also home to many of the island's nesting sea birds.

Site Importance

Ireland's Eye, which is an existing pNHA (203), SAC (2193) and SPA for birds (4117), displays some of the best exposures of Cambrian rocks on the east coast of Ireland and is therefore recommended as a County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

This is a popular tourist attraction during the summer, with large numbers of visitors reaching the island by ferry. This leaves from Howth Harbour - frequency and availability are dependent on the season. The island is home to many species of nesting sea birds from late April to mid August. The birds and their nests should be left undisturbed as much as possible, during any visit.



Left: Coastal cliff sections made up of Cambrian rocks.
Right: An inland exposure of greywacke, sandstone and quartzite.

Ireland's Eye

