



THE GLENIFF BARYTES MILLS

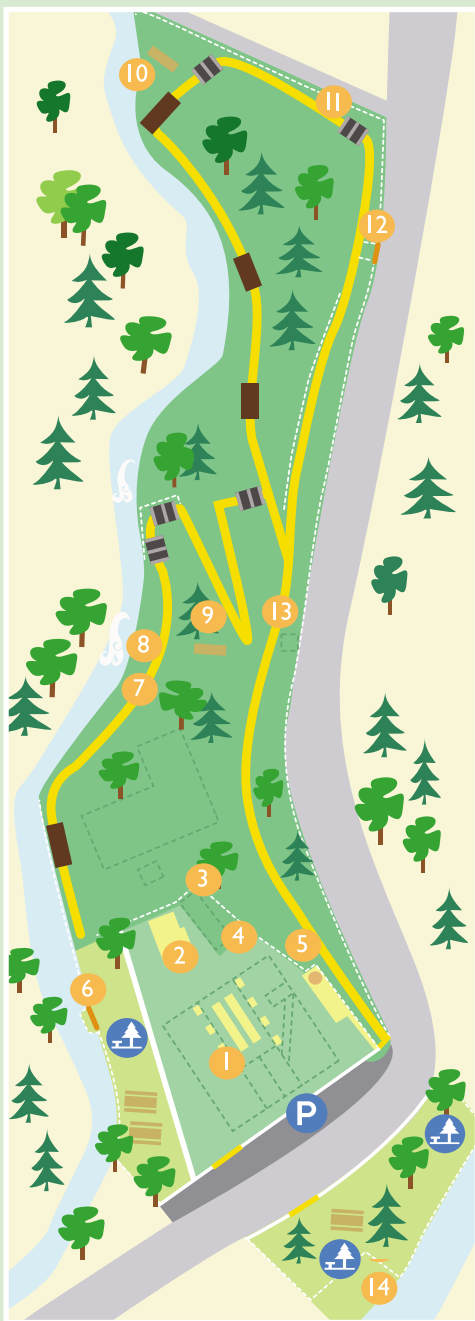
Ballintrillick Environmental Group Limited



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THE GLENIFF BARYTES MILL SITE

Ballintrillick Environmental Group acquired the old Barytes mill in 1995 and developed it into a local amenity. Picnic areas, forest paths, a sculpture trail as well as the remains of the old mill are all available for you to enjoy.



- 1 Foundation of Mill
- 2 Restored Stables
- 3 Water Wheel
- 4 Water Trough
- 5 Chimney
- 6 Lookout point
- 7 View of waterfall
- 8 Access to river
- 9 Seating area
- 10 Dam & bench
- 11 Stile
- 12 Access to public road
- 13 Supports for Mill flue
- 14 Access to water

WHAT IS BARYTES?

Barytes ore is a very heavy inert mineral that was and still is used in a wide variety of industries. Its chemical stability means that it can be used to give added value to a whole range of products, such as paints, plastics, pottery, etc. It blocks radiation and is easily ground into a very fine white powder. Atomic power stations and x-ray rooms are plastered with a protective

coating of Barytes. In medicine, a sludge of Barytes, called a Barium meal, taken orally, is used to assist in the x-ray of soft tissues of the stomach. It is used extensively in the oil exploration industry, where its heaviness and insolubility in water, are exploited as drilling mud. In dams and under-water structures it gives additional weight to concrete foundations.



The carboniferous (coal forming swamp forests of Palaeozoic era) uplands of Benbulbin have been associated with the mining of Barytes ore for more than 120 years. There is little evidence of this today but nonetheless the Barytes industry played an important role in the local and national economy of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

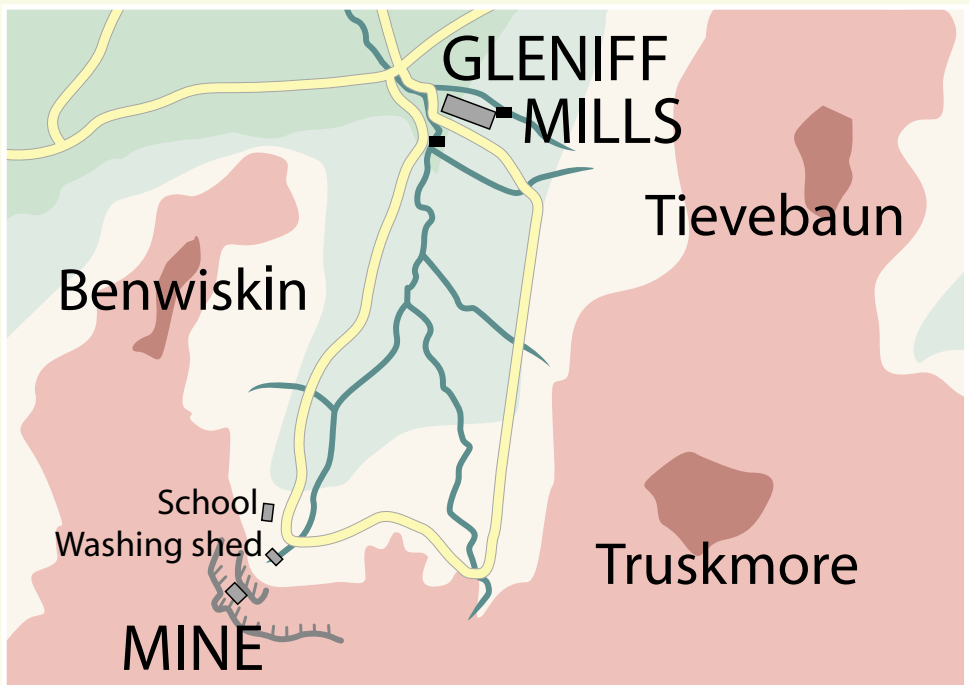
The first recorded mining operation was in 1858. Between then and 1979 six separate companies worked the ore. While there are considerable deposits remaining, they are currently uneconomical to mine.



GLENIFF BARYTES COMPANY LIMITED 1888-1922

Sir Henry Gore Booth of Lissadell, Co. Sligo, became involved in the mining of Barytes in the 1880's. In 1888 he entered a partnership agreement with George Tottenham of Glenade, Co. Leitrim to mine Barytes on Sir Henry's lands in Gleniff. The enterprise was called The Gleniff Barytes Company. It was agreed that Gore Booth would fund the operation and that Tottenham would manage it. The agreement was short lived; unsanctioned spending by Tottenham brought the partnership to an end in 1890. Sir Josslyn Gore Booth took over the business in 1890 and ran the operation through various managers until a Scottish consortium took over in 1911. Sometime in 1922 the Gleniff Company ceased operations. The Gore Booth mine was opened on the Gleniff cliffs at the southern end of the

Gleniff valley about 10m below the top of the limestone crags and was accessed from the scree slopes below via a 30m ladder fixed to the cliff face. An aerial tramway was used to take the ore down to a washing shed, which was a short distance from the public road. The span of the wire ropeway was about 1000m. At the bottom the ore buckets were tipped into a truck, which was pushed along a platform and dumped down a chute into the washing shed. The processed ore was then carted to a mill near the entrance to the valley. Initially the Gleniff Co. had intended to open a mine on the slopes of Tievebaun near the mill site at Ballintrillick. The Barytes there proved to be of poor quality. The southern ore vein was difficult to access but was of high grade quality.



The Gleniff Barytes mill was built near the entrance to the Gleniff valley, within walking distance of the village of Ballintrillick. The site was developed here because there was an abundance of water and on the expectation of opening a workable mine on the slopes of Tievebaun Mountain. The road distance from the washing shed to the mill site is a little over two miles (3.5 km). The distance from the Tievebaun mine would have been considerably less.

A wheel lay on a ledge of cliff just above the mine. The two strands of the cable still hang down the cliff and are visible from



the road on bright sunny days. The miners work was hard and dangerous. Every day the workers made their way to the valley on foot, some travelling long distances. From the washing shed they had

to trek over the steep scree and ascend the vertical ladder, 30m, to reach the mine entrance. According to local folklore they laboured by candle light and a day's work was measured by the "length of a penny candle". Conditions would have been damp and dirty. The mine was at different levels. The ore had to be manually hauled up the main level, using hoists, and carried to the mine entrance. Here the ore was shovelled into the iron buckets on the tramway, which descended under gravity to the washing shed below.



WHAT WAS THE MILL COMPLEX LIKE?

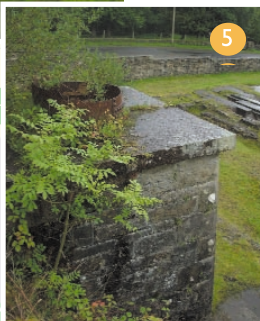


It had two levels. A long grassy embankment, with a paddock, ran the full length of the lower aspect. There was a stable directly opposite the paddock. The restored stable gives a clue to the architecture of the other buildings.

The main building consisted of three integrated units. The front facade had two large and two small doors and two long windows. There were six long windows on each of the side walls.



The 3D model of the main building was constructed from foundation details. It is based on old maps, local folklore and evidence found at the derelict mill site.



Opposite this building were three attached outhouses, which adjoined a stone flue with an iron chimney.

At the upper level entrance a small weighting house was located. A cart track led from here to an "L" shaped building, probably corrugated iron clad, where the ore was in all probability given an initial grinding.

- 1 Foundation of Mill
- 2 Restored Stables
- 3 Water Wheel
- 4 Water Trough
- 5 Chimney

A water trough carried water from the adjacent stream into this building and possibly the lower one. A mill wheel may have been driven from this source of power. At the junction between the two levels a wooden bleaching vat was situated, in which the ore was bleached.



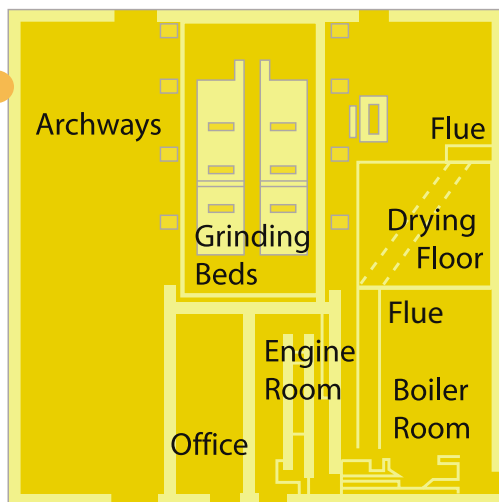
Another enclosed structure was located on the top level behind the main mill building, purpose unknown. From here a gantry ran into the lower building. The mill manager and his family lived in an apartment upstairs over the office.

The plan of the main building shows the features of the floor structures which were uncovered when the stable was restored by Ballinrillick Environmental Group. The foundations in the boiler room suggest that a Lancaster twin boiler was used in the factory.

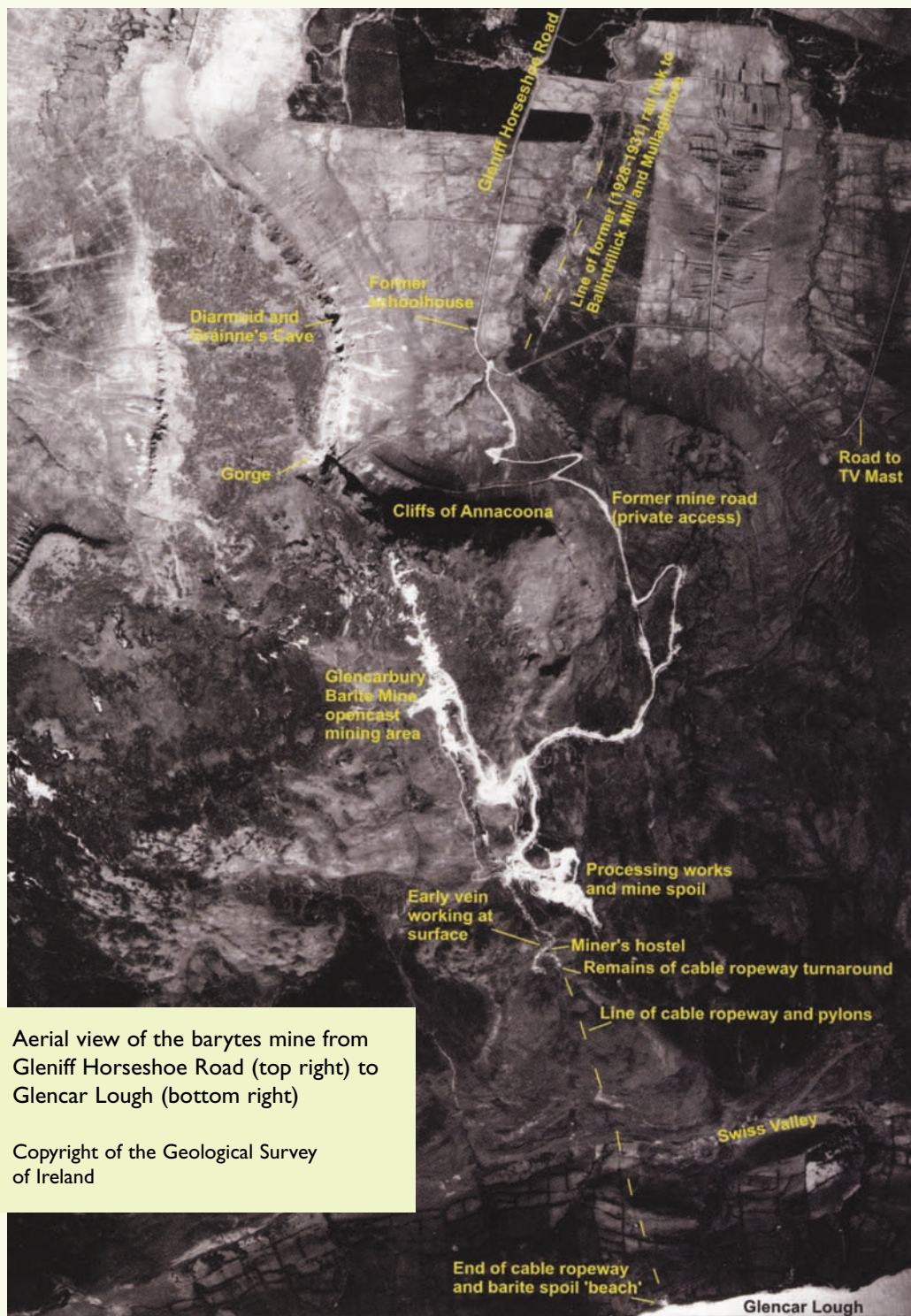


The structure of the engine bed and wheel sump in the engine room is that of a single cylinder horizontal steam engine.

In the mill the Barytes was ground and bleached with dilute sulphuric acid in a wooden vat. Next it was dried on a tiled



floor by waste steam and heat passing under the floor to the chimney. After being dried the ore was ground to fine powder and packed into barrels for export through Sligo and Mullaghmore ports.



Aerial view of the barytes mine from Gleniff Horseshoe Road (top right) to Glencar Lough (bottom right)

Copyright of the Geological Survey of Ireland

A Scottish consortium took over the enterprise in 1911 and the Ballintrillick River and its tributary were dammed. Both dams have a head of about 25ft (7.6m) and were connected to the mill by a series of flumes and gates. The dams are still in existence. The last section of the water course consisted of an iron pipe about 2ft (0.6m) in diameter. Local historians have described the pipe in detail. A large underground chamber, now filled in, at the rear of the main building is connected via a tunnel to the tributary. This suggests that a water turbine

may have been installed on the site.

The Gleniff Company ceased operating, after about 30 years, around the 1920's. All of the machinery appears to have been removed from the mill site in and around that time. Mining continued in the area however until the 1960's.

The mill was burned to a shell sometime in the 1920's. The derelict buildings were demolished by Sligo County Council in the 1960's and the rubble used in road construction.

THE GLENIFF BARYTES MILL SITE TODAY

In 1995 the site was acquired by Ballintrillick Environmental Group who uncovered the mill foundation while developing an amenity area on the site. Great care was taken to preserve the site so that the present and future generations would be aware of and learn about the industrial archaeology of the Gleniff area.





For children and adults alike there are a number of pieces of sculpture along the paths to find. They were created and donated to the Group by local artist Gerry Foley.



Today the mill site is a tourist attraction and community amenity area as well as a sanctuary for local wild life.

The Paddock is now a picnic area and the paths have been cut out of the self seeded forest that grew up since the mill ceased operations. The small dam is still visible at the top of the site as are the supports for the flumes.

There are viewing areas over the river and waterfalls and seating areas to sit down and listen to the birds sing!



An area of natural beauty, inhabited with an abundance of wildlife - red squirrels, deer, badgers, foxes and a wide variety of birds. Peregrine Falcons inhabit the upper mountain areas while owls inhabit the lowland forest areas. Sightings of Buzzards and Golden Eagles have also been reported.



PLACES OF INTEREST

The Benwiskin Centre and Mill site is nestled between the Atlantic ocean and the dramatic mountains of Benwiskin, Truskmore and Tievebaun.

The area is steeped in history with Stone Age monuments like the Megalithic Tomb at Creevykeel or Tawley Mass Rock which dates back to Penal Times (1600's) to the grave of one of Ireland's best loved poet's - W B Yeats.

- 1 Cross
- 2 St Patricks Holy Well
- 3 Creevykeel Megalithic Tomb
- 4 Classie Bawn Castle
- 5 Tawley Mass Rock
- 6 Old Barytes Mill
- 7 Diarmuid & Gráinne's Cave
- 8 Yeat's Grave
- 9 Highcross
- 10 Round Tower



THE BENWISKIN CENTRE

The Benwiskin Centre is a project of Ballintrillick Environmental Group, an environmental group dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the environment. The Centre is run in an environmentally sustainable and eco-friendly way and was awarded the EU Flower Ecolabel Certificate in July 2008 in recognition of their 'Green' approach to their services from the European Commission.



The Benwiskin Centre provides self catering accommodation all year round. Guests can avail of private or shared rooms. The Centre sleeps 26 and can be hired in its entirety for large groups and workshops.

The Centre provides social amenities and activities for children and adults including classes in Spring and Autumn in art, speech and drama, yoga, pilates, basket making etc.

Other activities at the Centre include socials, cards, parent and toddler sessions, community organic garden project, summer camps, office and laundry services.



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GPS 54° 24' 46" N 8° 23' 26" W



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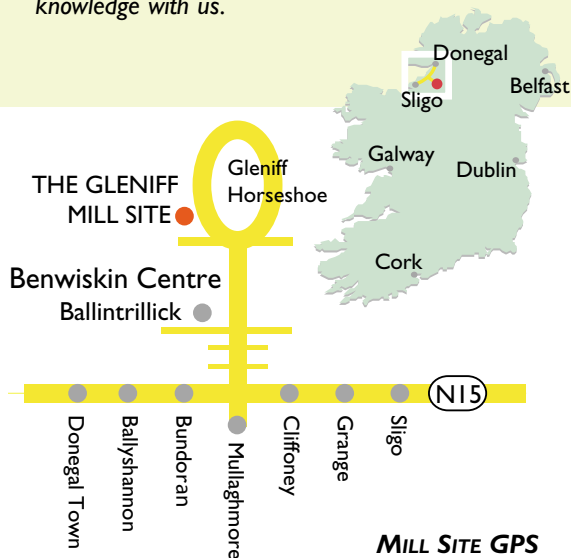


Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority



- Please do not enter on to private roads or land without permission from the owner.
- The maps are not to scale and are only to be used as a rough guide.
- Stay safe especially around water.

We wish to express our thanks to Gerry Foley for his research and for sharing his extensive knowledge with us.



MILL SITE GPS

54° 23' 56" N 8° 24' 2" W