

CLARE - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE

Carran enclosed depression

Other names used for site

TOWNLAND(S)

Castletown, Ballyconry

NEAREST TOWN

Corofin/Ballyvaghan

SIX INCH MAP NUMBER

6, 10

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE

128000 198000 (sink) = R28000 98000

1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER

51 1/2 inch Sheet No. 14

Outline Site Description

Large enclosed depression

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Large internally draining basin with inlet [springs](#) and outlet via a swallow hole (or [sink](#)) developed within Carboniferous limestone.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Carran depression is the largest karstic enclosed depression in Ireland and Britain. It is approximately 4.5km² in area and 40m deep, implying a considerable length of time for development. The depression is divided into sub-enclosed basins and is ringed by moderate to steep slopes. Water enters the hollow via springs and exits via the Castletown sink in the south. The waters re-emerge at the Fergus River Cave and other Fergus valley springs. Under wet conditions much of the floor of the depression becomes flooded even though the 'watertable' is some 120m below the floor of the feature. The structure and hydrology of this depression resembles both an [uvala](#) (large and complex [dolines](#)) and a [polje](#) (closed depression in a karst area).

Site Importance

The site is of National importance and is proposed for NHA designation under the IGH 1 Karst theme of the GSI's IGH Programme.

Management/promotion issues

None apparent, but the site deserves some explanation in the form of an interpretive panel by the pub in Carran, which provides a good viewpoint.



The Carran depression at the Castletown River sinks in autumn, looking east



The Carran depression in winter looking northeast

Carran enclosed depression

