

CLARE - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE

Fergus River Cave

Other names used for site

TOWNLAND(S)

Roughan

NEAREST TOWN

Corofin

SIX INCH MAP NUMBER

Clare 16

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE

125200 192272 = R252 923

1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER

51

1/2 inch Sheet No. 14

Outline Site Description

Very old cave (>350,000years old) with excellent depositional and decay features. One of the oldest dated in Ireland.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Ancient cave within Carboniferous limestone.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Fergus River Cave is one of the oldest known in Ireland, with calcite deposits dated at greater than 350,000 years old. It contains more than 3km of largely abandoned streamway which floods in very wet conditions. The water is derived in part from the sink in the Carran enclosed depression. The cave is an abandoned rising for the Fergus River, although it can flood in very wet conditions. It is notable also for mud stalagmites and for glacially derived sediments. The latter were probably from Connemara, since the lithologies include a migmatitic granite and a variety of metamorphic clasts. A similar derivation by glaciers from Connemara has been suggested for quartz sediments in a small cave at Poulsallagh, 20km away.

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

The cave is unsuitable for any general promotion, and is dangerous even for experienced cavers in flood conditions, or after heavy rainfall. It is on private land and also difficult to locate.



Fergus River Cave

