

CLARE - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE

Gortlecka

Other names used for site

TOWNLAND(S)

Gortlecka

NEAREST TOWN

Corofin

SIX INCH MAP NUMBER

10

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE

Gortlecka 1,2: 132020 194990 = R3202 9499

1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER

51 1/2 inch Sheet No. 14

Outline Site Description

Mushroom rocks – isolated wave worn stones in limestone pavement area, adjacent to turlough

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Although the limestone is of Carboniferous age, the probable development of the undercut lips and mushroom shapes is a postglacial development.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The two stones in question are an example of a phenomenon classed as mushroom stones. These are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. In some stones such as at Gortlecka, this has created a marked smooth surface below a lip, whilst in more extreme cases a mushroom shape develops with a cap on a pedestal. These lakes are thought to have probably existed from around the end of the Ice Age when water levels were much higher. In some cases the present day lakes probably had a wider extent, but in others the lake has entirely disappeared. In some cases an alternative explanation that the stem of the mushroom was buried by bog has been made, but this seems unlikely for Gortlecka.

Site Importance

The site is of County Geological Site importance under the IGH 1 Karst theme of the GSI's IGH Programme, but are within the Burren National Park and the Mullaghmore site (IGH1-4) of national importance for demonstrating karst landscapes. The Gortlecka stones comprise a few of only about 63 mushroom stones known in the country as a whole.

Management/promotion issues

As the stones are inside the Burren National Park, they are the least vulnerable to damage or loss. They are potentially worthy of specific attention on interpretative panels, guidebooks etc.



Gortlecka 1 stone
(Photo: Louise Dunne)

Gortlecka

