

CAVAN - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Western Cuilcagh – Burren Forest		
Other names used for site			
IGH THEME	IGH1 Karst; IGH7 Quaternary		
TOWNLAND(S)	Burren, Gortnaleg, Lanliss		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Blacklion		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	4		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	607080E 834250N		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	26	GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	7

Outline Site Description

This site comprises the Burren Forest property of Coillte, in which public access roads, parking, paths and signage to geological and archaeological heritage have been developed. In addition an unmanned visitor centre was under construction in autumn 2013.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rock here is Lower Carboniferous limestone of the Dartry Limestone Formation, with both bedded and mudbank type. A patchy covering of glacial till, including many erratic boulders, and peat is also present. The Cuilcagh Dyke, of igneous origin, crosses the site but is not exposed.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

A wealth of geological interest is present in this site, but the most visible features are the glacial erratics. These are large boulders of sandstone from Cuilcagh Mountain that have been dumped by ice onto limestone rocks. Because they are insoluble, the sandstone erratics protect the limestone underneath from solution by rainwater and thereby create a pedestal on which the sandstone boulder sits. The height of this pedestal (around 30 cm on average) reflects how much the limestone land surface has been lowered by weathering in the past 10,000 years or so since the Ice Age ended.

In the northeastern part of the Burren Forest is the Lost Valley, a large doline, or enclosed depression, into or from which no river flows. Such dolines are characteristic of karst landscapes developed on limestone rock. This one is one of the largest in the region and probably formed when the covering of sandstone rocks on top of the limestone was very different to today's pattern, before ice sheets removed vast thicknesses of it. A large river may have flowed down the valley in pre-glacial times, draining off the sandstone slopes above. Due to its size and complexity the Lost Valley may be considered as an uvala, or a series of coalesced dolines, rather than a single one.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

The site is a very important component of the West Cuilcagh site proposed for geological NHA status.

Management/promotion issues

The Border Uplands Project, funded through INTERREG, is developing an unmanned visitor centre on site in the Burren Forest. The Geopark and Cavan County Council, in partnership with others, including Coillte, have already invested in this site as a key public amenity. This recognition and value will serve the geological heritage well. The educational publications produced by the Geopark serve the needs of formal school study visits.



A sandstone erratic on limestone pedestal.



The entrance to Burren Forest.



A sandstone erratic on limestone pedestal.



Split rock sandstone erratic is in two halves.



The Lost Valley uvala.



The Burren Forest seen from the south.



Walking infrastructure in the area is well developed with signed trails and stiles etc.



