

KERRY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Ardfert Quarry
Other names used for site	O'Carroll's Quarry
IGH THEME	IGH8 Lower Carboniferous, IGH1 Karst, IGH15 Economic Geology
TOWNLAND(S)	Sackville
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Ardfert
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	21
ITM CO-ORDINATES	480300E 622375N (centre of quarry)
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	71
GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	20
GIS CODE	KY006

Outline Site Description

This site comprises an extensive quarry cut into a low ridge.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The bedrock comprises Lower Carboniferous (Mississippian, 359-323 million years old) bedded and massive bioclastic limestone of the Cloonagh Limestone Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Ardfert Quarry has been operational since 1975, and produces ready mix concrete, concrete blocks, stone for aggregates, chippings, lime dust, screenings and drainage stone. The quarry is up to 30 m deep and the limestone rock unit exposed is massive, but heavily karstified.

The bedrock being quarried is pale grey, massive limestone, with pockets of well bedded coarse bioclastic calcarenites and calcirudites. Fossils of brachiopods *Gigantoproductus* and *Productus* are commonly found in the rock.

The karstification in the rock takes the form of deep, narrow, solutionally-enlarged fractures, wider cavities and cave chambers, as well as epikarst and limestone pavement revealed at the top of the bedrock when new areas are being stripped of subsoil to prepare for blasting.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This County Geological Site is an important representative site exhibiting deep, fresh exposures of limestone, which are probably the deepest inland in Kerry. The range of karst features adds to the interest of the site.

Management/promotion issues

The site is securely fenced off within its own compound, and the quarry is not suitable for general promotion, especially as the base of the quarry is currently active and very deep. Many of the rock faces are high, and in parts they may be unstable. Ardfert Quarry is likely to be of interest primarily to geologists.



The main entrance roadway into Ardfert Quarry.



Cavities and clay-filled fractures on the northern side of Ardfert Quarry.



A narrow, deep, clay-filled, karstified fracture in the limestone.



Limestone pavement freshly-exposed following subsoil stripping at the northern end of the quarry.



One of the deepest faces in Ardfert Quarry.

