

LOUTH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Windy Gap
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH11 Igneous Intrusions
TOWNLAND(S)	Corrahit
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Omeath
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	5
ITM CO-ORDINATES	713042E 813809N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	36 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 8/9

Outline Site Description

Windy Gap is a 200m-high mountain pass between the Slieve Foy (east) and Black Mountain (west) massifs. The site comprises a 200m-long road-side cutting on the west side of the road as well as the lower slopes of The Foxes Rock to the east.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks are all part of the Palaeogene Carlingford Igneous Complex. East of the road are layered gabbros of the Later Gabbro series; west of the road is granophyric microgranite, the youngest intrusion of the complex.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Windy Gap marks the line of a northnorthwest-southsoutheast-trending fault that has brought the microgranite into contact with the gabbro. East of the fault the Silurian sedimentary rocks have been moved almost 1km south and north of the gap are in contact with gabbro. Faulting has caused intense fracturing of the microgranite that is well displayed in south-facing exposures at the southwestern end of the gap. The fractures dip steeply west. At least four dolerite cone sheets intrude the microgranite, their thickness varying from less than 0.1 to more than 0.3m. One is cut by a steep fault. All dip 40–50° southwest.

Around 100m east of the road, a stile leads to the base of The Foxes Rock, the northwestern end of the Slieve Foy massif. The hillside exposes two of the five layered gabbro intrusions that comprise the Later Gabbros of the Carlingford Igneous Complex. Layering within the intrusions is subtle and not apparent in outcrop but pyroxene, plagioclase and weathered olivine can be readily seen in the dark-coloured crags on the hillside.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; may be recommended for Geological NHA

Windy Gap is an important, easily accessible site for observing aspects of Carlingford Igneous Complex geology, specifically good exposure of layered gabbro intrusions, faulted and fractured microgranite and fault-related juxtaposition of microgranite, gabbro and the Silurian metasediments. The presence of numerous dolerite cone sheets, themselves affected by late faulting, adds to the interest of the site.

Management/promotion issues

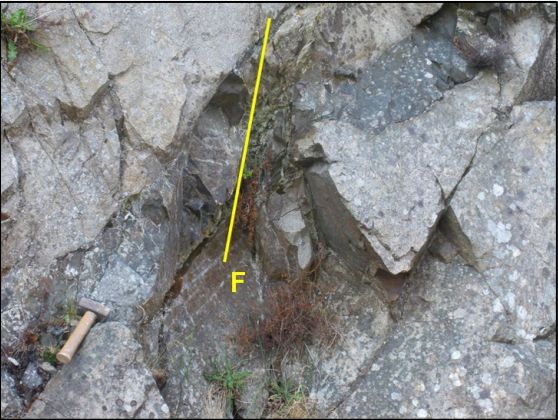
The site is on a well-trafficked scenic upland route. A recently expanded car-park on the east side of the gap is popular for short stops and picnics and as a starting point for hill-walking on the Slieve Foy massif. Beside the car-park is the Long Woman's Grave and a sign-board recounts her legend. The car-park would also be an excellent location for a sign-board describing the geology of the area. The site is within the Carlingford Mountain SAC and proposed NHA.



Windy Gap (south side), view to northwest: granophyre intruded by dolerite cone sheets.



Fractured and jointed granophyre (left); dolerite cone sheet (between lines) in granophyre, dipping west.



Dolerite cone sheet in granophyre, offset by fault (F) (left); view east from road of layered gabbro on western side of Slieve Foy (right).

