

MEATH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Rockwood Cliffs
Other names used for site	Boyne Walk
IGH THEME:	IGH 8 (Lower Carboniferous)
TOWNLAND(S)	Slane
NEAREST TOWN	Slane
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	19
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	294750 273200 = N 9475 7320
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	43 1/2 inch Sheet No. 13

Outline Site Description

Cliff section along the River Boyne.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

Lower Carboniferous (Viséan, Courceyan) limestone of the Boyne Formation (commonly known as 'Calp') and Waulsortian Limestone.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

A number of exposures of Lower Carboniferous limestone and occasional shale can be found along or near the banks of the River Boyne. Although a number of smaller outcrops can be seen on the north banks of the river the best example can be seen at Rockwood, a forested area opposite Slane Castle, on the south banks of the River Boyne. These rocks form cliffs that reach heights of up to 25 metres and are predominantly composed of thick bedded to massive brown-grey locally fossiliferous limestone and shale. The cliffs were most likely formed by the erosive power of glacial meltwater during the last Ice Age. Meltwater would have passed through the valley scouring out a deep gorge in the underlying bedrock creating the cliffs.

Site Importance

This is one of the best outcrop exposures along the Boyne Valley, which already lies within the existing Boyne Woods NHA. Natural well exposed outcrops such as these are rare, especially ones that are so easily accessible. It has good teaching potential. Its geological heritage value needs to be incorporated into the already existing pNHA synopsis. It should also be listed as a County Geological Site in Meath.

Management/promotion issues

Although access to the cliffs is on private land (part of Slane Castle) it is a recognised public right of way. All of the outcrops described in this report can be accessed via this riverbank walkway, although in places dense forestry and vegetation obscure some sections of the cliffs.



Left: Riverbank exposure of thick bedded dark limestone and shale (Calp) of the Boyne Formation found on the south side of the River Boyne. These rocks can be seen shallowly dipping to the southwest.
Right: Fossilised coral found within the Waulsortian Limestone, opposite Slane Castle.

Rockwood Cliffs

