

# MONAGHAN - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Fin McCool's Chair and Kilmactrasna Cave</b>		
Other names used for site	Lough Fea Demense		
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH1 Karst</b>		
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Doohatty, Kilmactrasna</b>		
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Carrickmacross</b>		
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>31</b>		
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>683394E 802428N (at Fin McCool's Chair)</b>		
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.</b>	<b>8/9</b>

## Outline Site Description

The site comprises a wooded area of karstic enclosed depressions, with an enigmatic cliff feature (Fin McCool's Chair) and an old quarry exposing a small cave (Kilmactrasna Cave).

## Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The limestone is the Mullaghfin Formation of Lower Carboniferous age, but the karstic features are all most likely to be of post-glacial age, formed in the last 11,000 years. There may however be an inherited element of landscape from earlier interglacial periods in the cliff feature.

## Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The old quarry at Kilmactrasna is a good representative exposure of the upper part of the Mullaghfin Formation, consisting of carbonate mudbanks or 'reef' that has a massive structure and displays almost no bedding.

Kilmactrasna Cave is approximately 10m long, consisting of a low entrance into a narrow crawl, which opens into a larger chamber about 5m long and 3m high. It is decorated with some speleothems and has a large roof boulder that has fallen in the middle. There are signs of bats using the cave.

The woodlands to the north and east of Home Farm, adjacent to Lough Fea House, have grown on a complex of dolines, or enclosed depressions of karstic origin. They are mostly dry, although maps of the entire area show some ponds and channels which may fill on a seasonal or shorter term basis dependent on rainfall. A small enclosed depression in one grass field has recently been reseeded after insertion of a gravel drainage channel, indicating that thin tills or soils may play a part in retaining water in localised areas.

Fin McCool's Chair is the dominant feature on the highest point of the woodland. It is a dry arcuate cliff of limestone that faces east. Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 (six inch) maps indicate a cliff height of almost 15m. The cliff is dry but precipitation of flowstone deposits, creating a smooth face in the central area, suggests that water formerly flowed over it as a waterfall. Vegetated limestone pavement is developed on top of the cliff area.

## Site Importance – County Geological Site

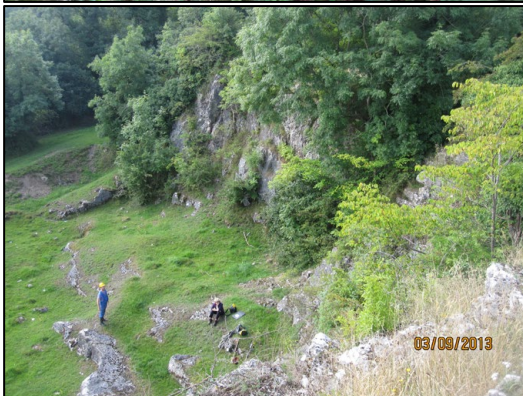
This site is of County Geological Site importance, both as a local landmark and as a somewhat enigmatic karstic landscape feature within a complex of dolines with an associated cave.

## Management/promotion issues

The site is all on private land, mostly of the Lough Fea Estate and any possible promotion of the site could only be in partnership with the landowner. Kilmactrasna Cave is too small to be of interest to sport cavers, has rubbish dumped in the entrance and should be left undisturbed as a bat roost.



Fin McCool's Chair seen from below.



Top left: Monaghan's Heritage Officer examines the vegetated limestone pavement above the cliff of Fin McCool's Chair.

Bottom left: Kilmactrasna Quarry.

Right: Fin McCool's Chair seen from the top of the cliff.



