

OFFALY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Crancreagh Mushroom Rock		
Other names used for site			
IGH THEME	IGH1 Karst		
TOWNLAND(S)	Crancreagh		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Kilcormac		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	22		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	607500E 716495N		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	53	GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 Sheet No.	15

Outline Site Description

A Mushroom Rock – isolated upstanding rock in a grass field.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rock is composed of Carboniferous Limestone but the solutional weathering is post glacial – that is, Holocene in age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Crancreagh is one of the best examples of a mushroom rock in Offaly, where undercut lips and shapes are believed to be the result of former temporary lake levels where the undercut section of the rock was submerged below lake water which was acid enough to dissolve the limestone it was in contact with. Such lakes were common in the period at the end of the Ice Age when extensive meltwaters could be trapped behind temporary dams of glacial till and remaining ice sheets. In the case of Crancreagh it is possible that Lough Boora had a formerly more extensive area which created the mushroom rock. The double undercut would suggest a shorter period of near submergence with a subsequent lowering of lake level to the height of the lower more marked undercut. Nearby is the conical remnant of a probable companion which may have dissolved more fully or have been broken and moved in historical field clearance work.

An alternative hypothesis for some mushroom rocks is that they were dissolved below a soil or bog deposit which has subsequently either shrunk or been eroded away to reveal the weathered section of the rock. There is insufficient evidence to be certain of the origins at Crancreagh, although a more extensive former Lough Boora seems a more likely cause.

Site Importance – County Geological Site; recommended for geological NHA

As well as being recommended as a County Geological Site, this is one of the best mushroom stones nationally this has been recommended to NPWS for designation as a Geological NHA of national importance.

Management/promotion issues

The Crancreagh rock needs protecting from deliberate or inadvertent damage.

The rocks are in private farmland and not accessible without the permission of the landowner.



Crancreagh Mushroom Rock.



'Side' view of Crancreagh Mushroom Rock.



Conical remnant of another mushroom rock in the same field.

