

WATERFORD - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Ballynacourty
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH8 Lower Carboniferous
TOWNLAND(S)	Ballynacourty
NEAREST TOWN	Dungarvan
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	Waterford 31
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	230945, 92425
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	82 1/2 inch Sheet No. 22

Outline Site Description

The Ballynacourty site comprises coastal foreshore rock exposures at the south end of Clonea Strand.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rocks are of Carboniferous Limestone, of the Waulsortian Formation.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Carboniferous Limestone rocks of the Dungarvan Syncline (the term for the geological structure of the east-west trending valley inland from Dungarvan Harbour) are poorly exposed inland. This coastal site offers a good visible and accessible section through the main rock formation, the Waulsortian, which is especially diverse here. Many different characteristic features of the Waulsortian limestone rock, derived from its original sedimentary environment and process of deposition, have been described in a detailed study of this area.

At the southern end of the site there is a fault which separates the Waulsortian Limestone from the Ballysteen Limestone Formation which lies beneath it, but it is not easily seen. Some of the rock exposures of the Ballysteen Limestone Formation are very rich in crinoid fossils.

Site Importance

The coastal sections are very important for geological understanding of the regional structures and Ballynacourty is locally significant for exhibiting many of the different sedimentary facies of the Waulsortian limestone rock which underlies the Dungarvan valley. It is of County Geological Site importance.

Management/promotion issues

The site is not at any great risk, although dumping of exotic rock boulders in any kind of coastal protection measure should be avoided. Given that Clonea Strand has safe access for the public and a car park, the site could be promoted. However, the geological stories that it displays are quite complex and not easily presented in a straightforward way.



A view northwards from the southern end of Ballynacourty. Ballysteen Limestone Formation is in the foreground. Rocks across the sandy bay are part of the Waulsortian.



Ballysteen Limestone Formation with crinoid fossils, at the southern end of the site. Coin is €2 for scale.



