

WATERFORD - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

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| NAME OF SITE | Ballynamintra Cave |
| Other names used for site | Ballynamintra Bone Cave |
| IGH THEME | IGH1 Karst |
| TOWNLAND(S) | Ballynamintra Lower |
| NEAREST TOWN | Dungarvan |
| SIX INCH MAP NUMBER | Waterford 30 |
| NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE | 216417 95900 |
| 1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER | 82 1/2 inch Sheet No. 22 |

Outline Site Description

An inactive cave in a wooded limestone escarpment.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The cave probably originated during the Quaternary (Ice Age) with further development in the Holocene (post-glacial) Period. It is developed within Carboniferous Limestone.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Ballynamintra Cave is a significant cave for geology but also for archaeology. The cave is 95m in length, including small extensions discovered in 1988. The main walking sized passages display a classic phreatic tube shape, created when the void space was fully filled with water which dissolved in all directions into a sub-circular tube. The end of the main entrance passage has an aven in the roof which intersects the surface giving a window into the daylight above.

The cave was excavated in 1879 and as well as human remains of various types, animal bones recovered included bear, Giant Irish Deer and reindeer. In 1928 arctic fox remains were added to the list. Collections from the cave are housed in the National Museum of Ireland (human remains in Antiquities Division, animal bones in Natural History Division) but all could benefit from a modern reassessment.

Site Importance

This is one of the most important of the Waterford Caves and may retain some archaeological potential. It is of County Geological Site importance as a karst site.

Management/promotion issues

The 1988 extensions included highly decorated stalactite rich areas termed the 'White Forest Grotto' by the discoverers, but a 1998 visit showed that many had been damaged by local children visiting the cave. The cave deserves protection from damage and destruction, but is not really suitable for general promotion or access.



The phreatic tube forming the entrance to Ballynamintra Cave.



Ballynamintra Cave is towards the right hand side within the wooded scarp.



Ballynamintra Cave: open aven inside (left) and entrance (right).



