

WATERFORD - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Coumiarthar
Other names used for site	Coum Iarthar, Boola Lakes
IGH THEME	IGH7 Quaternary
TOWNLAND(S)	Boolacloghagh
NEAREST TOWN	Rathgormack
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	Waterford 6
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE	231590 112190
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	75 1/2 inch Sheet No. 22

Outline Site Description

Coumiarthar is a deep glacial corrie, situated along the northern flank of the Comeragh Mountains.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The feature was formed during the Quaternary (Ice Age), by glacier ice scouring out a deep, armchair-shaped hollow at the edge of the mountains.

The majority of the feature therefore comprises ice-scoured bedrock, which itself is Devonian Old Red Sandstone, and is composed of conglomerates of pebbles and cobbles.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This corrie has an almost-vertical backwall up to 200m in height. Three pater noster lakes floor the feature, so called because they form a series of linear lakes connected by a single stream, similar to the form and outline of rosary beads (hence 'Pater Noster', which means 'Our Father' in Latin).

The corrie is bounded by both lateral moraines, which form a pile of debris around the back and sides of the feature (lateral to the ice which floored the valley), and end moraines, which stretch across the entrance to the valley and partially bound the lake features. The moraines comprise well-drained, bouldery material, and the area around Coumiarthair is littered with large erratic boulders.

As the beds of rock at the sides and back of the corrie are relatively steeply-dipping, the ice has scoured out blocks of these leaving some spectacular rock crags (cliffs) along the valley sides.

Site Importance

This is a particularly impressive corrie feature, being narrow and steep, and having a form different to that seen elsewhere in the Comeraghs with the lateral moraines and chain of lakes. The rock crags also add to its uniqueness. This is part of a complex of Quaternary geology of national importance.

Management/promotion issues

The corrie has a rough pathway up to it and little promotional signage in the general area. Though the feature is potentially under-promoted, the absence of a cut/built path and signs in fact helps to protect the locality as a pristine portion of montane terrain. The site is already part of the Comeraghs Mountains Special Area of Conservation and pNHA (SAC – 001952).



Pater noster lakes at the base of Coumiarthar.



View of corrie backwall, the lakes and moraine at the corrie entrance of Coumiarthar.



Steep gully in the backwall of Coumiarthar.



