

WICKLOW - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

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| NAME OF SITE | Devil's Glen |
| Other names used for site | Devil's Glen Forest, Devil's Punchbowl, Glanmore |
| IGH THEME | IGH4 Cambrian-Silurian, IGH7 Quaternary, IGH14 Fluvial and Lacustrine Geomorphology |
| TOWNLAND(S) | Ballymoneen, Birchwood, Ballymaghroe, Tiglin, Boleynass, Boleynass Upper |
| NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE | Ashford |
| SIX INCH MAP NUMBER | 18, 19, 24, 25 |
| ITM CO-ORDINATES | 723800E 699050N (centre of feature) |
| 1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER | 56 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 16 |

Outline Site Description

Devil's Glen comprises a deep ravine, oriented east-west, bounded by woodland, and stretches a distance of almost 3km. The Vartry River flows eastwards along the floor of the channel emptying into the Irish Sea near Wicklow town.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The gorge is cut through Early Cambrian (c. 520 million years ago) bedrock consisting of greywackes and shales (Bray Group). The gorge is a glacial meltwater channel (Quaternary) and formed around the time of deglaciation at the end of the last Ice Age.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

Devil's Glen is a steep-sided ravine c. 1km southeast of Vartry Reservoir. In less than 3km, the glen carries the Vartry River across the eastern rim of the Vartry basin and down to the Wicklow coastal plain at Nun's Cross, c. 100m below the level of the Vartry basin floor. An impressive waterfall drops into a pool (the Devil's Punchbowl) at the west end of the gorge from where it flows gently eastwards through the glen. The sides of the gorge rise steeply c. 100m above the river bed to heights of 166m OD at View Rock, on the north bank of the river, c. 500m north of the parking area. View Rock (GR 724650 699100) is the type locality (the locality where the rock formation was originally described) for the Devil's Glen Formation (Cambrian-age Bray Group). This formation of green and red greywacke and shale is the older of the two Cambrian formations in Wicklow (the other is the Bray Head Formation). Rising near Great Sugar Loaf, the Vartry River flows south through Vartry Reservoir, veering southeast and east through Devil's Glen, and on to the sea at Broad Lough, north of Wicklow town. The lower reservoir was completed in 1863 (max. depth c. 18m), and the upper reservoir completed in 1923 (max. depth c.15m). Construction of the reservoir greatly regulated and reduced the discharge of water through Devil's Glen. (It has been suggested that were it not for Devil's Glen, the Vartry Basin would be occupied by a large lake.) No specific dates or detailed studies have been carried on the gorge feature. However, it is considered to have formed completely in the late-glacial period.

Site Importance - County Geological Site

The site is within a proposed NHA (Devil's Glen, 000178). Devil's Glen Forest is owned by Coillte. The location has good potential as a teaching site on glacial meltwater erosion, and whilst it is a macro-landform, the scale of the ravine can be appreciated by observing the ravine-sides towering over the mature broadleaf woodland growing along the river bank.

Management/promotion issues

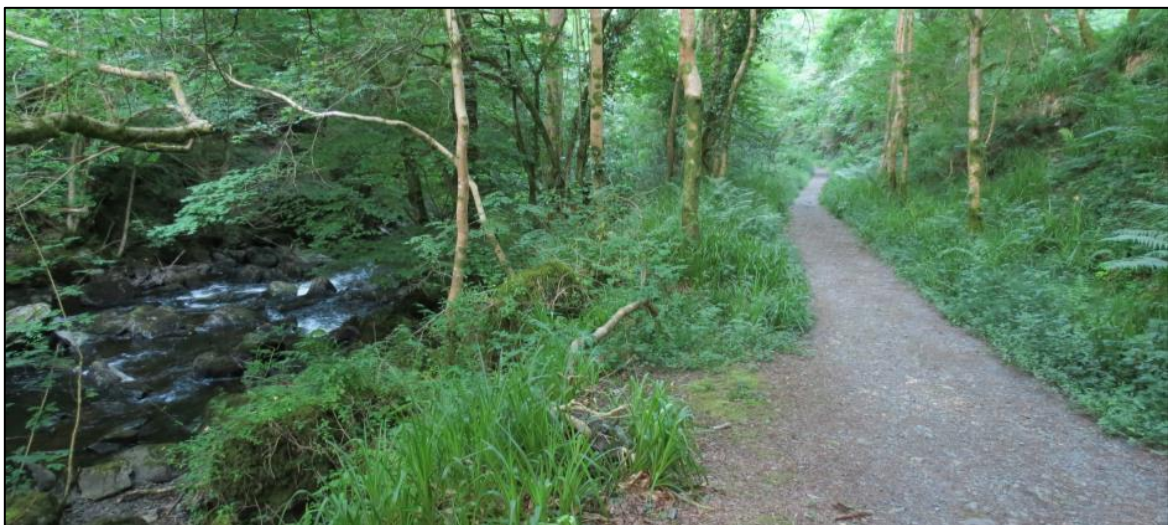
The site is accessible via the trails developed by Coillte in the woods along the south bank. The Waterfall Walk follows a route alongside the Vartry River in the ravine floor. A sculpture trail, *Sculpture in Woodland* (1994), also follows a route along the ravine floor. (The Seamus Heaney walk follows a route through the woods). The erection of a geology/landform information panel at the forest entrance, alongside the existing visitor information panel, would be a valuable inclusion at this recreational forest.



Devil's Glen (just east, downstream from waterfall). Waterfall Walk and Coillte woods on right (south) bank.



Cascades over Cambrian greywackes just upstream from the river bend to south (east end of Devil's Glen).



View downstream along the Woodland Walk on the south bank of the Vartry River.

