SLIGO - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE
Knocknarea Glen
Other names used for site
The Glen
TOWNLAND(S)
Knocknarea
NEAREST TOWN
Strandhill
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER
14
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE
162700 333355 = G 627 334
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER
25 1/2 inch Sheet No. 7

Outline Site Description
Linear narrow gorge – a limestone rift.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type
The gorge is within Carboniferous Limestone, but it is uncertain when it was formed. It is most likely to be post glacial. There are also active and relict tufa deposits.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest
This limestone rift is a very regular parallel sided and very straight gorge. It runs for approximately one kilometre, and is generally about 6m wide but can be up to about 15m wide. It is probably the result of slope failure and mass-movement of the downslope side. Movement has occurred along a fracture like those in the Swiss Valley at Glencar, once the side of the Knocknarea hill lost the support of the ice sheet at the end of the last glaciation (about 10-12,000 years ago). Rather than a spoon shaped slope failure, like at Glencar, it would seem as if the entire block slid out on one particular bedding surface, probably lubricated by groundwater under pressure, and a single fracture line formed the Glen.

There are also active and relict tufa deposits, which indicate lime charged waters seeping on horizons in the limestone.

Site Importance
The site is an interesting and important County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues
Although there appears to be easy public access, the site is probably a wildlife refuge, and encouragement of too many visitors would spoil the peace and wildness. It should be protected but not promoted widely in order to maintain the site as it is. There is parking close to entrance.

The Glen
Photos: Matthew Parkes

Tufa deposits