SITE SYNOPSIS

SITE NAME: BLACKROCK'S CROSS

SITE CODE: 000976

The Blackrock's Cross Natural Heritage Area comprises a valley cut by the young Blackwater River in the sandstones and shales of the lower slopes of Cuilcagh Mountain in Co. Cavan.

This valley, and others like it, provides topographical relief from the open, fairly featureless slopes, and by the same token the vegetation here provides relief from the acid grassland community that is widespread on the lower slopes and represented elsewhere in the Cuilcagh Mountain/Lough Cratty Bog NHA. Where the acidic grassland runs into the valley it has Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) and Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*).

In places the valley side supports a low growing woodland of Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Eared Willow (*Salix aurita*), oak (*Quercus* spp.), and birch (*Betula* spp.). Between the trees grow patches of Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Bilberry and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). The slopes around the stream itself are boulder-strewn, with wet shaded rock faces supporting the notable Tonbridge Filmy-fern (Hymenophyllum tunbrigense).

16.11.2009