

# Transnational Global Geopark in Ireland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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# Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark, Ireland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

**Geology:** The geology of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark is dominated by a classic succession of marine and deltaic sedimentary rocks including limestones, mudstones, shales and sandstones from both Lower and Upper Carboniferous times between 340 and 320 million years ago. These rock sequences are best seen in the upland regions of the Global Geopark where the rock layers are exposed in dramatic cliffs, escarpments and caves. The oldest rocks date back 895 million years to the Precambrian period and consist mainly of metamorphosed sedimentary rocks. Palaeogene intrusive rocks are present in the form of igneous dykes that were created 65 million years ago when magma welled up through cracks in the overlying rocks. Quaternary deposits starting from 1.8 million years ago include glacial material in the form of drumlins, moraines and other features while extensive peat bogs have formed since the last glaciation about 15,000 years ago.

**Geography:** The Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark is the World's first Global Geopark crossing an international border. It lies in the north-west corner of the island of Ireland, much of it is in County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom and a sizeable remainder is in County Cavan in the Republic of Ireland. The region displays a classic, glaciated landscape comprising of extensive uplands that have been smoothed down by successive ice sheets. The uplands are intersected by broad u-shaped valleys that sweep down to the surrounding lowlands where numerous lakes have formed in glacial hollows and swarms of drumlins form many egg-shaped, rounded hills. The uplands contain extensive areas of forest, blanket bog and karst where the underlying limestone has been carved out by the abundant rainfall to form significant caves systems including the world famous Marble Arch Caves.

**Education and Sustainable Development:** Education and sustainable development are core principles of the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark that help to deliver the key objectives of effective management, economic benefits, conservation and environmental awareness. Formal education programmes are available for primary schools, secondary schools and universities. Study subjects include geology, geomorphology, geography, natural habitats, archaeology and tourism. Informal educational events are offered to the general public for all ages including children, families, adults and senior citizens. Sustainable development ensures that the Global Geopark supports the regional tourist industry by making the geology, landscapes and natural habitats of the area accessible for the enjoyment of visitors and local people without damaging the environment. The Global Geopark contains countryside activity areas where people enjoy outdoor pursuits such as hiking, cycling, caving, water sports and disabled access. Visitor sites include Marble Arch Caves and a variety of geosites, viewpoints, nature reserves, lakes, rivers, churches, castles, prehistoric tombs and other archaeological remains.

## **Dates**

Year of EGN membership entry: 2001

Year of GGN membership entry: 2004

Subsequent Revalidation: 2016

It became the world's first transnational Global Geopark in 2008.

**Official Website**

[www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com](http://www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com)

**Contact**

Mr. Richard Watson (Manager of Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark)

email: [richard.watson@fermanaghomagham.com](mailto:richard.watson@fermanaghomagham.com), phone: +44 28 66 348855



Map of Ireland and Northern Ireland showing location and size of Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark

