GeoSkills: slopes

Slope

Contour lines on an OS map show the steepness, or gradient, of a slope. The steepness of a slope is represented by how close together the contour lines are.

Cliffs are shown by contour lines that appear to be on top of each other.

Steep slopes are shown by contour lines that are tightly packed together.

Flat land is shown by an absence of contour lines.

Gentle slopes are shown by contour lines that are spaced widely apart.
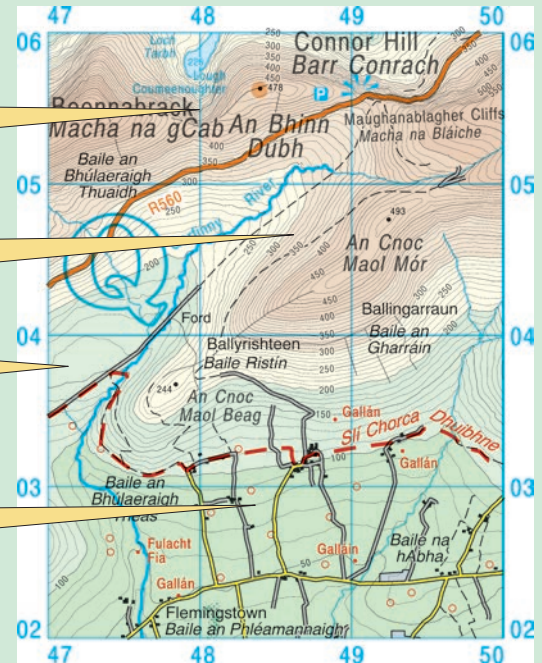

Figure 9.9 OS map showing different slopes. What area is the orange road avoiding on the OS map?

Types of slope

There are four main types of slope.

An **even slope** has contour lines that are evenly spaced.

A **concave slope** is gentle near the bottom and steep near the top. The contour lines are widely spaced at the bottom and closer near the top.

A **convex slope** is steep near the bottom and gentle near the top. The contour lines are closely packed at the bottom and wider near the top.

A **stepped slope or compound slope** has steep and gently sloped sections. The contour lines are close together at some parts and widely spaced at other parts.
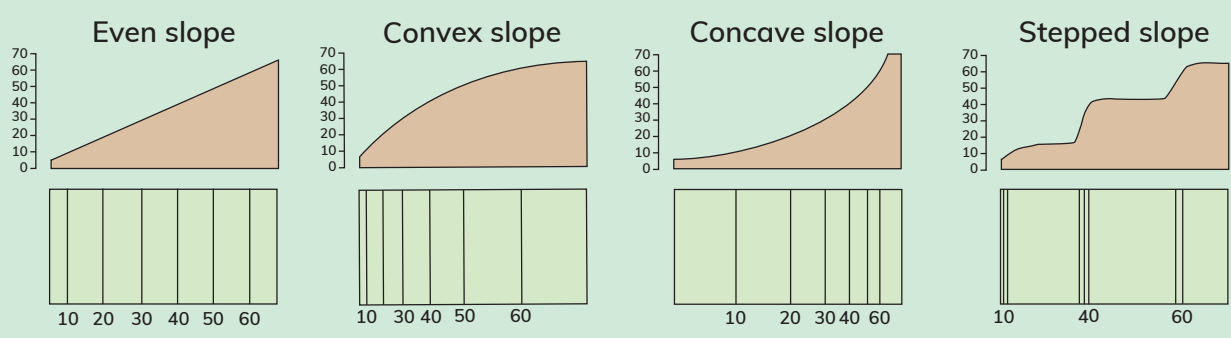

Figure 9.10 Types of slope