

LAOIS - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Rock of Cashel
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	IGH3 Carboniferous to Pliocene Palaeontology, IGH8 Lower Carboniferous
TOWNLAND(S)	Cashel
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Portlaoise
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	18
ITM CO-ORDINATES	647810E 692375N
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	54
GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO.	15

Outline Site Description

Disused quarry in a limestone hillock.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The rock here is Carboniferous Limestone, part of the Clogrenan Formation, which is from the Brigantian Substage, the youngest part of the Viséan Stage.

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

This hillock has some natural exposures of rock, but the principal interest lies in two disused quarry faces, which display some of the character of the rock. The limestone was quarried by Laois County Council for use in making roads from 1906 to the 1950s. The faces show some beds full of productid brachiopods – effectively preserving the sea floor animal communities at the time of deposition of the limestone. Other fossils common here are crinoids, so called 'sea lilies', fragments of which can make up a large component of some limestone beds. There are some sedimentary features of the limestone beds which are interpreted as evidence of deposition by turbidity currents.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

This site was listed as an Area of Scientific Interest in the An Foras Forbartha Report of 1981. It is a good representative site for a particular formation within the Carboniferous Limestone stratigraphy in Laois.

Management/promotion issues

The Rock of Cashel is private farmland and is not suitable for promotion without negotiated arrangements in place with the landowner. The passing motorist can glimpse the quarry faces when driving south past the site. The site should not be confused with the more famous Rock of Cashel in Tipperary. The main section of quarry has had some infill on the southern side of the quarry floor with soil from elsewhere, but this has not obscured the faces at its current level.



The main section of quarry at the Rock of Cashel.



The smaller section of disused quarry at the Rock of Cashel.



A bed surface with numerous productid brachiopod fossils. Each lump on this surface is one shell, approx. 7 or 8 cm wide.



A palaeokarstic surface in the quarry. Soil fill on southern side of main quarry.



A view of the main quarry from the top of the hillock.

