LAOIS - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	**Timahoe Esker**
Other names used for site	
IGH THEME	**IGH7 Quaternary**
TOWNLAND(S)	**Esker, Cloonnabacky**
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	**Timahoe**
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	**18**
ITM CO-ORDINATES	**653825E 691815N (centre of largest segment)**
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	**55 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 16**

Outline Site Description
The Timahoe Esker includes a number of high, sinuous ridge segments, which all form part of the same esker system, deposited both under the ice sheet and at its margin as the ice withdrew northwestwards across east Laois at the end of the last Ice Age.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type
The Timahoe Esker is formed within an area dominated by bedrock of Lower Carboniferous limestones. The esker itself is Quaternary in age, having been deposited either under or at the edge of the northwestward-retreating ice sheet during deglaciation, approximately 14,000 years ago.

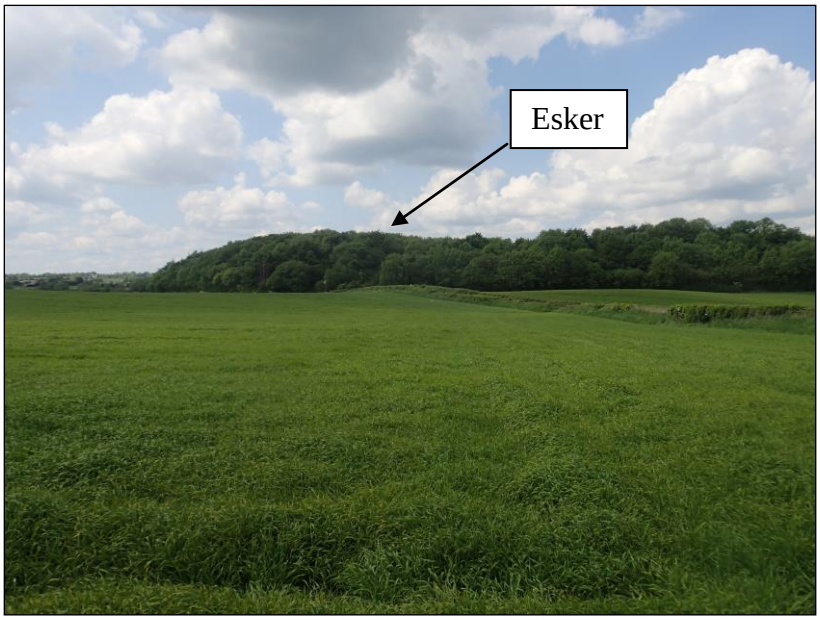
Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest
Where present the esker ridge is a striking feature, standing proud of the flat landscape of till (boulder clay) and sands and gravels within which it was deposited. Only three relatively intact portions remain, and although much of the feature has been quarried out in recent years, they are especially impressive. In all three localities the esker is comprised of a raised, elevated ridge of sands and gravels blanketed by broadleaf forestry.

The esker feature is important in that it records faithfully the ice movement across this area of east Laois which is along its orientation, *i.e*. northwest to southeast. Associated sands and gravels in Esker and Cloonabacky Townlands, as well as in Timahoe Townland itself, flank the esker and are probably part of an associated ice marginal fan. The sands and gravels within the esker feature itself are comprised chiefly of limestone clasts.

Site Importance – County Geological Site
What segments remain of the feature are still high, striking examples of a dry sand and gravel ridge, standing proud of the surrounding landscape. This esker and the associated sands and gravels in the locality are a good example of a deglacial, meltwater-deposited complex, with portions deposited under the ice, and portions at the ice margin.

Management/promotion issues
This system comprises a well-defined landform sequence and should be listed as a County Geological Site. Though four segments of the esker have been designated a pNHA (sitecode 000421), only three here are proposed for a County Geological Site as the fourth has been quarried out.

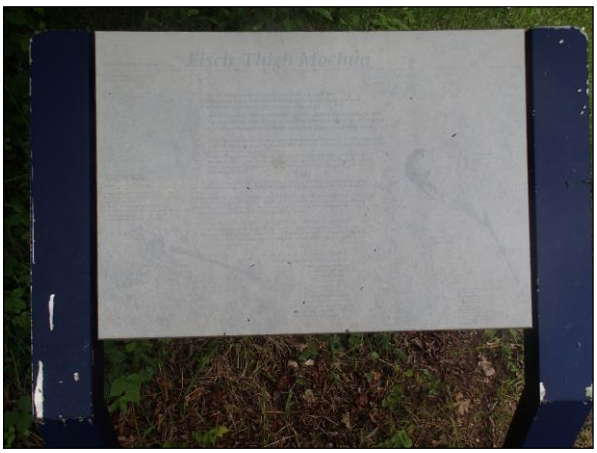
Furthermore, the three remaining esker segments themselves are not deemed worthy of pNHA status geologically or geomorphologically. A walking trail across one of the beads, and a signboard detailing the ecology of the feature, is an important local amenity resource. A new signboard (the existing one is faded beyond reading) including data on the ice sheet history in the locality would prove worthwhile.



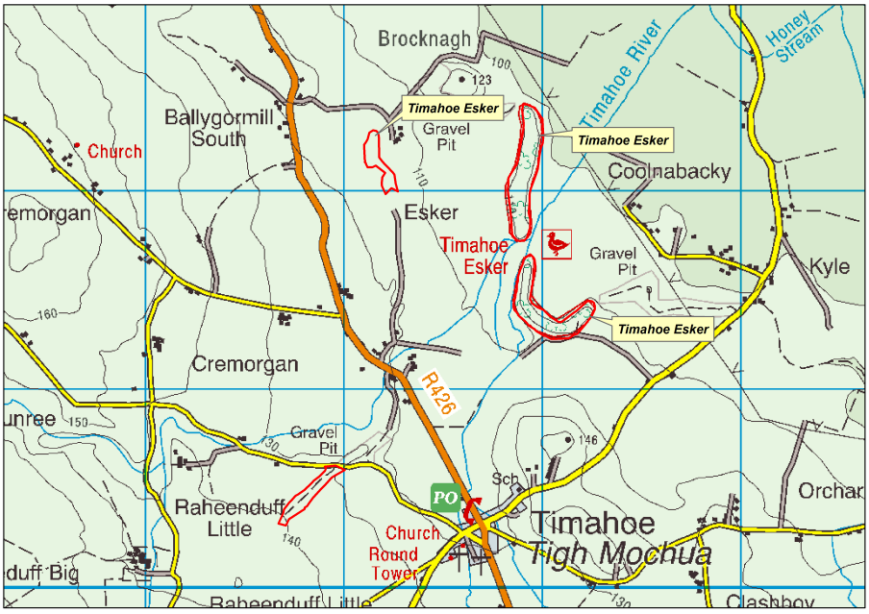
The Timahoe Esker, looking north. Note the high, elevated nature of the ridge.

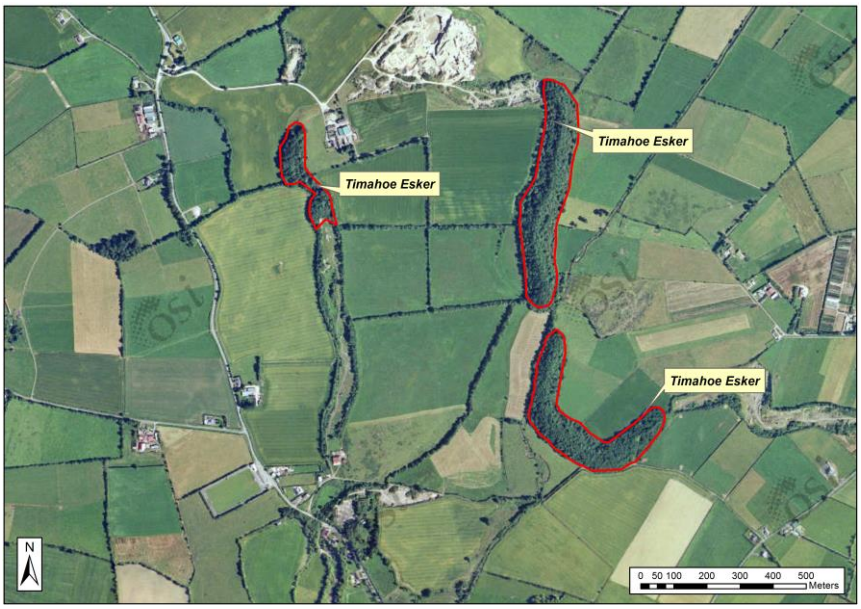
Looking northwards across the walking trail on top of the Timahoe Esker.

One of the quarried out esker segments, southeast of Timahoe Village.



The faded signboard along the Timahoe Esker walking trail.


Brocknagh
Timahoe River
Honey Stream
Timahoe Esker
Gravel Pit
Timahoe Esker
Church
Ballygormill South
Coolnabacky
Esker
Timahoe Esker
Gravel Pit
Kyle
Timahoe Esker
Cremorgan
R426
Gravel Pit
Sch
PO
Raheenduff Little
Church
Round Tower
Timahoe
Tigh Mochua
Orchar
Clashboy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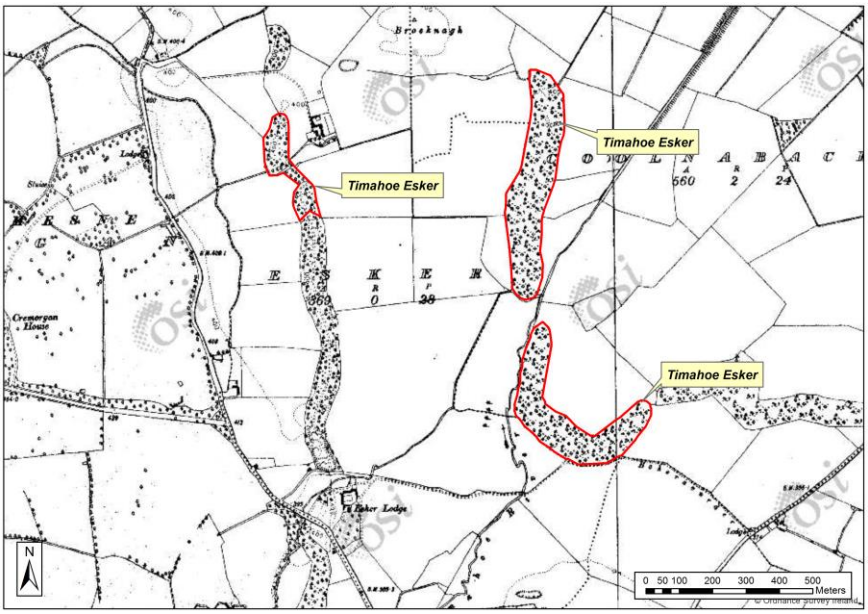
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