

OFFALY - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

NAME OF SITE	Mount Briscoe Cave		
Other names used for site	Cavemount		
IGH THEME	IGH1 Karst		
TOWNLAND(S)	Mullalough or Cavemount		
NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE	Daingean		
SIX INCH MAP NUMBER	10		
ITM CO-ORDINATES	649740E 729200N		
1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER	48	GSi BEDROCK 1:100,000 Sheet No.	15, 16

Outline Site Description

A small, inactive cave.

Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The cave is in Carboniferous limestone, in thick bedded strata of the Allenwood Formation. The age of the cave is unknown, but presumed to be older than Holocene (i.e. more than 10,000 years old).

Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest

The Mount Briscoe Cave is found in an elevated ridge of limestone rock and although not a long cave, the width and height of chambers within the cave would suggest that it was formed at a time when the water table was much higher. The present hill does not have enough catchment to have created this cave and so it may have originated from an inter-glacial period or even pre-glacial. However, no dating techniques have been applied and the prospects of doing so are poor.

The cave is 'T' shaped and descends so that there is 27m or more of depth to the cave. One aven (a void in the roof of the cave) near the end has connected to the surface, and other small voids nearby suggest there may be other caves within the ridge, but only the one cave is actually known and mapped.

Site Importance – County Geological Site

There is little elevation in the limestone bedrock across Offaly to allow caves to form in the post-glacial period, and so the rarity of this possibly quite old cave warrants its inclusion as being recommended a County Geological Site.

Management/promotion issues

The cave is not accessible as it is on private land, and it is not suitable for visiting or promotion. A celebrated, but very difficult rescue took place in 1977, when the landowner saved the life of a person who had entered the cave and became stuck in a narrow section. It is not an event that needs repeating.

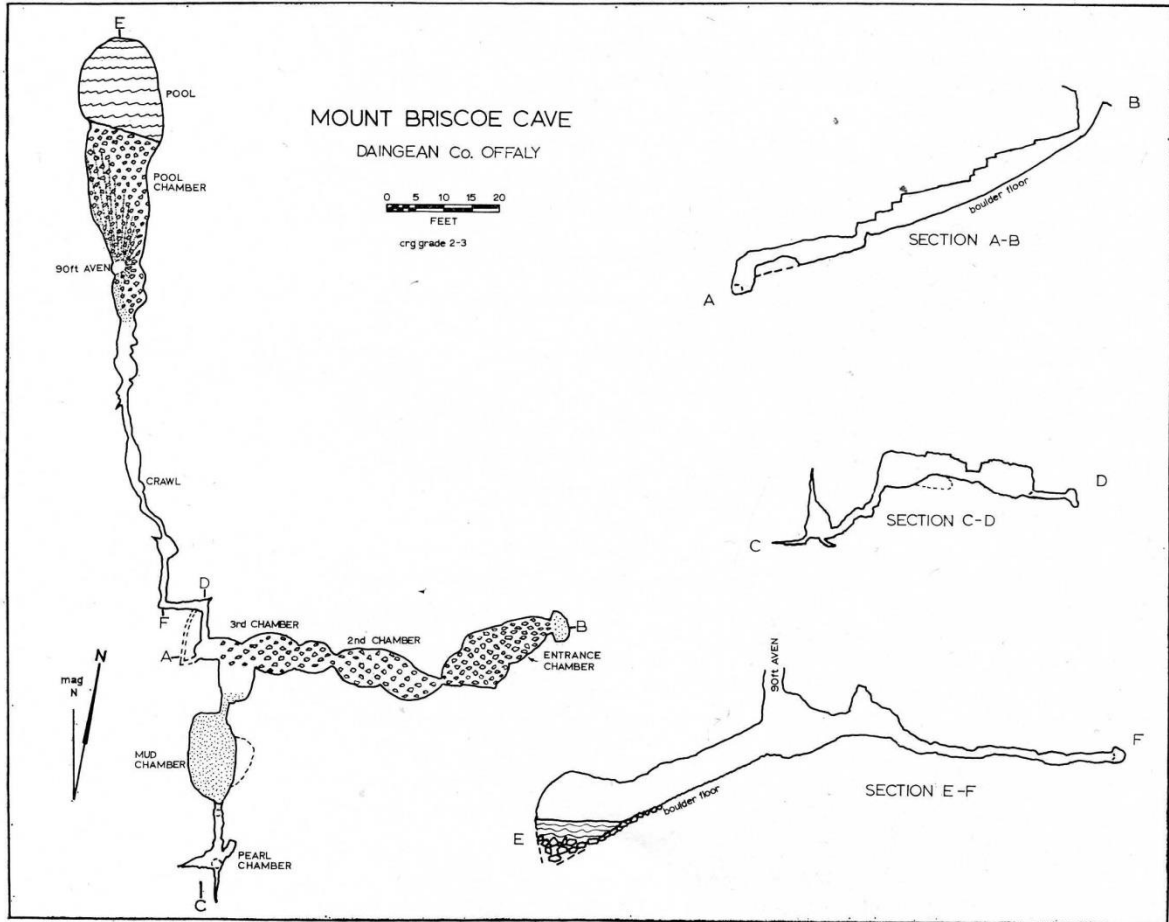


Fig. 1.

The cave survey does not convey the extremely tight nature of the entrance and of several connections between chambers.

Mount Briscoe Cave survey reproduced from Pelling, M.J. 1966. Mount Briscoe Cave, Co. Offaly. *Irish Speleology*, Volume 1, No. 2, 36-37.



The cave entrance is an extremely narrow slot in the ground surface.

