

## WESTMEATH - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Kilbeggan Racecourse Esker</b>
Other names used for site	Racecourse Esker
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH7 Quaternary</b>
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Ballyoban, Loughanagore, Guigginstown</b>
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Kilbeggan</b>
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>633560E 737915N (centre of feature)</b>
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>48 GSI BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO. 15</b>

### **Outline Site Description**

A short but prominent esker ridge, immediately north of Kilbeggan Racecourse.

### **Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type**

The Kilbeggan Racecourse Esker is formed within an area dominated by bedrock of Lower Carboniferous limestone. The esker itself is Quaternary in age, having been deposited under the westward-retreating ice sheet during deglaciation, approximately 14,000 years ago.

### **Main Geological or Geomorphological Interest**

Glaciofluvial processes deposited this high but relatively short ridge of sands and gravels during deglaciation at the end of the last Ice Age. Meltwater flow in tunnels beneath the ice sheet covering the Midlands was of high energy and carried large loads of sediments accumulated in the ice from its erosive work as it moved. Changes in the dynamics of the meltwater channels would lead to rapid accumulation of gravels in sinuous ridges, often with beads.

The Kilbeggan Racecourse Esker is a good example of a short esker with two long beads. To the west end, a wider spread of hummocky gravels indicates where the energy of the meltwater was not confined in the ice and spread out, although these are not defined as part of the site.

### **Site Importance – County Geological Site**

Amongst the many examples of eskers in County Westmeath this is a good example of a particularly high, beaded esker, which has not been compromised by any quarrying and is a distinctive local landmark.

### **Management/promotion issues**

Quarrying should not be permitted, to maintain the integrity of the landform. A gun club has access to part of the esker and overall the feature is not accessible to visit.



General view of the esker, looking north from beside Kilbeggan Racecourse.



Distant view of the Kilbeggan Racecourse Esker from the west.



View of the Kilbeggan Racecourse Esker, main bead, approaching by road from the north.

