

# WICKLOW - COUNTY GEOLOGICAL SITE REPORT

<b>NAME OF SITE</b>	<b>Powerscourt Deerpark Cave</b>		
Other names used for site			
<b>IGH THEME</b>	<b>IGH 12 Mesozoic-Cenozoic</b>		
<b>TOWNLAND(S)</b>	<b>Deerpark</b>		
<b>NEAREST TOWN/VILLAGE</b>	<b>Enniskerry</b>		
<b>SIX INCH MAP NUMBER</b>	<b>7</b>		
<b>ITM CO-ORDINATES</b>	<b>720285E 711500N (cave entrance)</b>		
<b>1:50,000 O.S. SHEET NUMBER</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>GS1 BEDROCK 1:100,000 SHEET NO:</b>	<b>16</b>

## Outline Site Description

A small cave, which may have been enlarged by excavation, within a stream bed.

## Geological System/Age and Primary Rock Type

The cave is hosted in a fault breccia deposit that is about 12 million years old.

## Main Geological Interest

This cave is the only known natural cave in Wicklow, though it has been modified by channelling the downstream end into a conduit underneath the forest road. It is rare to find caves in Ireland formed in geological settings other than karstic limestone, and this cave is part water-eroded and possibly part tectonic fissure. It is formed within a breccia deposit created by a major fault which moved in the Tertiary Period, approximately 12 million years ago, and evidence of such faulting is rarely seen, except through interpretation of outcrop patterns. This site and the Glasnamullen site both show surface outcrops that provide direct evidence of faulting.

The fault deposit is iron rich and it is apparently a source of ochre, probably worked in the past, with some indication of excavation around the cave entrance. It is also possible that small amounts are collected by local artists today. The waterfall at the downstream mouth of the cave shows a curtain of ochreous precipitate.

## Site Importance - County Geological Site; recommended for Geological NHA

It is a small but significant site, which with the companion Glasnamullen, provides direct evidence of Irish geological history in Wicklow during relatively recent geological periods. This is very rare as such evidence is not normally preserved because this was during periods of erosion of the land.

## Management/promotion issues

The site is beside a forest road that is widely used by walkers, but is unlikely to be at risk from recreational users. It is not regarded as a risk to walkers, as anyone investigating the cave from the track would not penetrate further than the entrance as they would get a shower from the waterfall- which is picturesque but hard to photograph. It is such a short cave that sport cavers would not visit. Forestry operations may affect it, either by tree removal in the immediate vicinity or by windfall of adjacent trees. Also upstream felling may affect the stream flow into the cave, and change the sediment regime.

It could be promoted with a signboard, a Q-code symbol or other means, but is possibly best left to those who wish to investigate and identify it as of interest on their hillwalks. It appears on East-West mapping, and could be added to Ordnance Survey mapping if they adopted County Geological Sites as a layer in their data.



Left: The waterfall of iron minerals from the cave's exit.

Right: The location of the cave just off a bend in the forest track.



Left: Matthew Parkes within the cave.

Right: The view into the overhang and waterfall of the cave entrance.



Left: a small section of abandoned cave or an excavated area, adjacent to the waterfall.

Right: The bend in the forest road, with the cave off to the right.





